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SEATTLE WEEKLY



MASKED AND ANONYMOUS

WILLIS EARL BEAL finds
refuge from the enemies of art and
spirit in the woods of Washington.

BY VERNAL COLEMAN » **PAGE 23**



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BY MORGAN SCHULER

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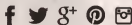
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News & comment

Compost-Mortem

An architect comes up with a surprising way to be productive one last time.

BY NINA SHAPIRO

Katrina Spade started thinking about her mortality when she hit 30, while studying architecture at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. What would she want to happen to her body after she died? she wondered. A traditional burial was out. She didn't like the idea of putting her body in a casket, "pumped full of formaldehyde." "I guess I'll be cremated," she thought, envisioning her ashes being scattered in beautiful New Hampshire, where she grew up, or maybe over the ocean.

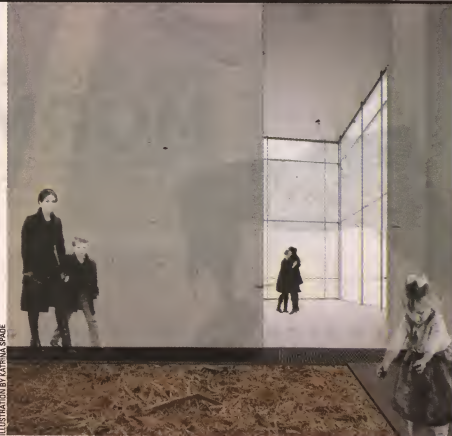
Then she started musing over the notion of a "natural burial," a phenomenon that has caught on in the past 10 or 15 years, helped by its starring role in one episode of the popular mid-'90s TV show *Six Feet Under*. Bodies skip the embalming process and are placed into the ground wrapped in a biodegradable cover—a simple pine coffin, perhaps, or even a cardboard box. Spade liked the idea of getting "bodies back to the earth as quickly as possible." The problem was that natural-burial cemeteries are usually located outside cities, where there is more land. And Spade considered herself a devoted city dweller, even in death.

Could there be an urban alternative? This, she thought, was a design problem. And, as an architecture student, design problems were her métier.

So began Spade's work on what she calls the "Urban Death Project," which turned into her thesis. Its central idea is so radical, so contrary to deeply ingrained notions about how we treat our dead, that she knows that one wrong word used to describe it will turn people off. But she's only one plain vanilla to put it: Our bodies would be composted. Turned to dirt, spread on gardens, used, as Spade sees it, for something "productive one last time."

Radical or not, her vision—which she kept refining after graduating, moving to Seattle, and taking a design job with the nonprofit architecture firm Environmental Works—is getting some traction. Last year, the New York foundation Echoing Green awarded Spade an \$80,000, two-year fellowship that will allow her to work on the project full time and build a prototype in the Seattle area.

"We recycle everything, why can't we recycle ourselves?" asks Nora Menkin, who has heard Spade talk about her idea. Menkin is the managing director of Seattle's Co-Op Funeral Home of People's Memorial, which seeks to provide affordable cremations and burials and help families explore alternatives to the norms developed by the heavily commercialized funeral industry.



Katrina Spade makes room for family and ritual in her Urban Death Project.

Spade is not the first to float the idea of composting bodies, according to Lynne Carpenter-Boggs, a Washington State University agriculture professor who has long worked on composting projects. But, she says, "This is certainly the most serious and socially appropriate trial I've heard about." By that she means that Spade's project tackles not only the mechanics of composting bodies, but also our need to create meaningful funerals around death and to treat the remains of our loved ones with respect.

Spade, speaking by phone last week from Rhode Island, where as it happens she was attending a memorial service for her grandmother, explains that she sees one of her chief jobs as "making this an incredibly beautiful experience for people." The model she has come up with, pictured in drawings that can be seen on her website, involves a four-story building that would have a series of ramps connecting each floor. The vertical model saves space, Spade

envisions it needing no more than a plot of land suitable for a small apartment building. Crucially, though, the structure also plays a ceremonial role, as loved ones would walk the body up the ramps in ritualistic procession.

On the third floor, the family would pause and the body would be wrapped in linen. Spade envisions a "death midwife" taking the lead here. Death midwives, also known as "home funeral guides," are another product of the movement to reclaim life's end from the industry that has grown up around it, according to Menkin, who took a California workshop to train for such a role herself. Midwives clean and prepare the body for what comes next, often working with family members who want to help—the process that Spade sees happening on the third floor of her center.

Then, family members would walk the body up to the top floor. Here, they would lay the body

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Four Concerns for the Pot-Buyer

BY MATT DRISCOLL

We've finally made it. You can, now, officially, buy legal weed in Washington for no other reason than to get totally baked in the privacy of your own home. And—at press time, at least—society as we know it has yet to crumble. Aside from a flood of predictable media coverage, actually, things seem very much the same. It's strange. That's not to say there's nothing to worry about. Far from it, dear reader. If there's one thing to keep in mind at the dawn of this new era, it's that there are more things than ever to worry about. Here are four of the most pressing.



It's Gonna Cost Too Much

Wait a minute! The weed might cost, like, \$27 a gram at first? There's no way we're going to stop buying bags from our mutual friend Tony at that price. Twenty-seven dollars a gram is not the revolution we voted for. The experiment is doomed. Good news for Tony, we suppose.



There's Not Gonna Be Enough of It

Enough of it? The pot's going to run out fast. If 502 Project Manager Randy Simmons has already predicted initial shortages. In Seattle, only one legal weed store opened Tuesday, and only 25 had been licensed statewide. Many growers don't expect to be making shipments until late summer. In other words, to buy legal weed in Washington, you need to line up early and pay twice as much as you would on the black market. Awesome.



Bad Trips Remember What

happened to Maureen Dowd when she went to Denver and tried legal weed? Remember the "hallucinatory state" she spent the "next eight hours" in? Curious people throughout Washington are probably curled up, experiencing the same "hallucinatory state" as you read this, "panting and paranoid." Just like Dowd was. Can you picture Maureen Dowd panting on weed? Is this really what we wanted?



No Brownies OK, so actually

Dowd is a pot candy bar in Denver, and in Washington that won't be a problem—because apparently the state Liquor Control Board has a *New York Times* subscription and wants to prevent people from getting away high on pot-infused treats. Probably a good call. Still, it's unfunny to learn we won't be able to live our fantasy of eating a legal pot brownie in Washington until the state approves them for consumption—which it has yet to do. Total buzzkill, you guys. ☹

mtdriscoll@seattletimeweekly.com

guest commentary » Kanye West*

On marriage: I DON'T HAVE TIME TO MESS UP MY MIND WITH WEED BECAUSE I'M BUSY CHANGING THE WORLD. ON DIVORCE: THESE THINGS RUIN MY ESTATE ALL THE TIME. AND WHEN THEY DON'T CATCH ME BANGING MY HOT WIFE KIM, THEY CAN STOP ME FEEDING STEAK DIANE WITH A LITTLE BEARNAISE SAUCE TO MY CAT. Y'Y MY CAT. ON GUNS: WHITE PEOPLE LIKE TO PUSH THE IDEA IT'S AFRICAN AMERICANS LIKE ME AND MY BEAUTIFUL WIFE KIM THAT GO AROUND PACKING HEAT, BUT LOOK RIGHT HERE: MOREY GUN HOTS ARE WHITE CRACKERS... YOU ALL CAN GO BACK TO YOUR INTERNET FORN, I'M EATING A SLAB OF WAGYU TENDERLOIN FOR BREAKFAST.

*This most likely is not the Kanye West, but someone with that handle had a lot to say in the SW comments section this past week.

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The building includes a "celebration space," above, and ramps for a procession, right.

Compost-Mortem

► FROM PAGE 5

on what Spade calls "the core"—the compost pile of bodies that would be mixed with wood chips and sawdust in a formula that fuels the decomposition process. Our bodies in themselves are a great start, full of "nutrients" that microorganisms love to eat, according to Carpenter-Boggs, who adds that it's this feeding frenzy that produces the energy crucial to the process.

Spade acknowledges that this communal pile, rather than individual plots of land or a cherished urn, is a psychological leap. "I'm asking people to accept that we don't all need our own space when we die."

And what about the smell? Spade says that's the first question she gets—a crucial one, because foul odors are a big problem in many composting facilities. Local composting giant Cedar Grove has faced community complaints about that for years.

Spade says she's confident that won't be an issue with her death centers, pointing to the process used to compost livestock animals. Carpenter-Boggs, who's helped pioneer the practice at WSU with the university's farm animals, explains that there are fewer fumes than at commercial facilities because animal composting doesn't involve rotting garbage. Commercial facilities also sometimes use specially manure as additives to the compost pile. That practice would be avoided when dealing with humans, says Carpenter-Boggs, who is working as an informal consultant to Spade.

The professor imagines the death centers, which would use neutral or even sweet-smelling additives, smelling "like a garden." Indeed, Spade hopes city dwellers will treat her sites as if they were such, strolling through on their lunch hour, for instance.



Still, there's no doubt she'll have to overcome what Meakin calls "the ick factor." The co-op funeral home director says marketing will be key.

Spade has got a start on that. She makes the environmental arguments for composting, noting that it won't take up arable land, require "toxic" chemicals as embalming and burial does, or use the 30,000 cubic feet of natural gas that she says it takes to bury a single body. If some might bristle at that approach—Michigan funeral director Thomas Iylich quipped to *The New York Times*, writing about natural burials a decade ago, that one must now be a "politically correct corpse"—Spade also has a financial case. She says composting should cost far less than either burials or cremations. **D**

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The Mariners Were One Pitch From Last Place—You Won't Believe What Happened Next

Safeco Field, April 23. Bottom of the ninth, one out, Mariners down a run. Third baseman Kyle Seager at the plate with runners at first and second. If Seager hits into a double play, the M's lose their ninth straight and fall to last in the A.L. West. Instead, Seager hammers a 95 mph fast-ball deep into the right-field seats, and the Mariners win.

SPORTSBALL BY SETH KOLLOEN

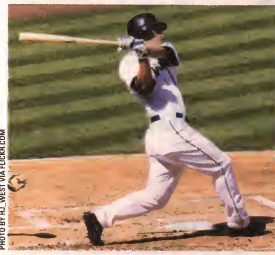
Since that pitch, they've had the best record in baseball. With apologies to BuzzFeed, here are four headlines you never saw coming.

61 SIGNS YOU AREN'T GOING TO MAKE THE MAJORS THIS YEAR

Baseball Prospectus is the annual bible of serious baseball fans and executives; it's the most in-depth analysis of the sport and its players available. The 2014 edition deemed 61 Seattle Mariners worthy of mention. Neither outfielder James Jones nor pitcher Roenis Elias were among them. Despite the absence of preseason interest, Elias made the starting rotation and has been just about average—in other words, the Yankees would pay \$10 million a year for him. Jones claimed the centerfield job in early May and has squeezed just enough value out of his hand-eye coordination and speed to hold onto it. He hasn't hit a home run, but has stolen 17 bases in 18 tries. With Jones in center, Mariners manager Lloyd McClendon has been able to use Endy Chavez or Michael Saunders in right, giving the M's the stellar outfield defense they need to win in Safeco Field.

58 THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW KYLE SEAGER COULD DO

In his first college season, Kyle Seager hit two home runs. In his first minor league season, he hit one home run. In his first Mariners season, he hit three home runs. The next year, 20. The next year, 22. This year, 13 already, and there are 75 games left. Middle infielders drafted in the third round are not supposed to lead their team in home runs. But Seager's 58 home runs



Kyle Seager and his immaculate swing.



in his first four seasons are the most by a Mariner draftee since Alex Rodriguez.

Seager's dramatic home run against Houston signaled an awakening for him as well as the team. He'd come into the game hitting just .156, without a home run, raising questions about whether his early career success was a fluke. McClendon had evinced no concern, saying "I've got to worry about Kyle Seager; I probably need to quit this job." Since the homer, Seager's hit .305. He leads the Mariners in home runs and RBI and has been, by Wins Above Replacement, a more valuable player than Robinson Cano. Now he is heading for his first All-Star Game.

FELIX HERNANDEZ WILL MAKE YOU RETHINK EVERYTHING YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW ABOUT PITCHING

King Felix Hernandez has the American League's fifth-highest strikeout rate and fourth-lowest walk rate. You equate that with a guy firing his fastball over the plate and daring opponents to hit it. Not Hernandez. He's throwing his fastball just 47 percent of the time, the lowest rate of his career. Hernandez' weapon is his change-up—but not the straight, slow change-up some pitchers throw. The King's version hurtles toward the batter at 89 mph, then dives down and sideways out of the strike zone, like a shoddy paper airplane. It's unhittable.

Hernandez was named to his fourth consecutive All-Star Game on Sunday, and rightfully so; he's been the best pitcher in the American League. Most important, the Mariners have won 12 of Hernandez's last 14 starts.

MIND-BLOWING PERFORMANCES ONLY PEOPLE WHO SAW RETURN OF THE JEDI IN A THEATER WILL UNDERSTAND

You think of the Mariners as a young team, but five children of the 1970s have played important roles. Lefty reliever Joe Beimel (age 37) has allowed just four earned runs in 29 appearances. Starting pitcher Chris Young (35),

an emergency pickup a few days before the season, is second on the team in wins. Willie Bloomquist and Endy Chavez (both 36) have been dependable fill-ins; between them they've played every position but catcher and have both even DHed. And the top Carter administration product of all, closer Fernando Rodney (37), has been, after a frightening start, what he's paid to be—the team's most effective reliever. Rodney walked six batters in his first eight games of the season, somehow escaping with only one blown save. In the 28 games since, he's walked only five batters, and now his season looks extraordinary: he leads the American League in saves with 25. **SD**

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RICHARD MEJIA WENT TO PRISON A MURDERER. HE LEFT A VICTIM, HIS EVENTUAL AND GRUESOME DEATH CAUSED BY A SYSTEM THAT IS KEEPING QUESTIONABLE MEDICAL STAFFERS ON THE PAYROLL.

BY RICK ANDERSON



Ricardo Cruz Mejia's final days began with a stomach problem. It was October 2010. After the 26-year-old Walla Walla State Penitentiary inmate discovered blood in his stool, he signed in at the prison infirmary. A test and exam turned up a severely inflamed colon. The onetime Latino gang member from Skagit County, doing 34 years for seven felonies including murder, was given hydrocortisone enemas and tabs of prednisone, used to treat inflammation. The prison medical staff also gave him sulfasalazine for abdominal pain.

In November, Mejia, a stocky, tattooed inmate with a closely shaved head, began to experience other symptoms—headaches, sore

throat, then vomiting. He also had begun to develop a rash, for which he was given penicillin, though it didn't seem to help.

In the ensuing days, he became a familiar figure to infirmary nurses. From December through the first week of January 2011, he showed up at the infirmary 14 times. Nurses doled out a topical corticosteroid for skin inflammation and tried other drugs to ease his symptoms. Still, none alleviated the persistent, painful irritations and stomach problems.

On January 10, 2011, he arrived to tell medical staffers his sore throat was killing him. "It hurts to breathe," he said, according to notes in his medical record. Staffers seemed stumped.

His vital signs weren't taken and no new treatment was offered.

Mejia returned the next day and announced he was having what he called "a medical emergency." In addition to his earlier symptoms, he had developed fever blisters, sore joints, and rectal pain. His pulse was racing, his blood pressure rising. He had been unable to eat for three days, he said.

Prison physician Barry Kellogg, who examined him, did not find Mejia in any acute distress and prescribed more prednisone and sulfasalazine. He'd later recall he saw Mejia only briefly, and was not informed by the nurse who was assisting him and had treated Mejia earlier that the patient turned out to be allergic to sulfasalazine. Nor did she tell him, Kellogg recalled, that Mejia had a rash and had been diagnosed with colitis, an inflamed colon.

On January 13 at 8 a.m., Mejia was back complaining of similar problems, and a new one—blisters on his anus. He was examined and given an oral antifungal.

The next day, Mejia returned—this time with painful mouth and rectal ulcers and severe abdominal pain. He'd been unable to have a bowel movement for four days, he said. He was given hydrocortisone, milk of magnesia, and an anesthetic. A nurse provided moistened gauzes to place on the painful skin ulcers.

Nurse Allison Oleson would later say that it was clear Mejia was "quite sick" that day. "When this kid came into the exam room, he was clearly in distress."

She said she called on Kenneth Moore, a physician's assistant, to take a look at Mejia. (Known as PAs, the assistants are not accredited doctors but practice medicine on a team under the supervision of physicians and surgeons; typically they are formally educated to diagnose illness or injury and provide general treatment.)

But Moore, like the earlier doctor, did not examine Mejia, Oleson recalled. He didn't even see him. During a phone chat with the nurse, he ordered Lidocaine, a topical pain-numbing gel.

Mejia returned to his cell. But his symptoms grew worse. At 4:30 the next morning, January 15, a medical staffer who visited Mejia in his cell undertook a brief examination and told him to come into the infirmary a few hours later.

When the inmate showed up at 7:30 a.m., he was seated uncomfortably in a wheelchair. He was unable to sit and was experiencing diarrhea. His pulse, temperature, and blood pressure were all rising and his buttocks were red with blisters.

At 8:45, Moore, the PA, agreed to examine him. But he initially decided not to admit Mejia to the prison's inpatient unit. Pressed by nurse Vickie Holesinski, who recognized signs of sepsis—indicating Mejia was suffering from widespread infection with a threat of multiple organ failure—Moore relented.

Mejia was treated with antibiotics and given whirlpool baths. Still, two and a half hours into treatment, he was breathing rapidly, and his blood pressure had plunged while his heart continued to race. He had skin excoriations over much of his body, particularly down his legs and around his buttocks. In some places, his skin had broken open, turned purple, and was draining. He was dizzy and in pain, he told nurses, and suffering from shortness of breath.

Faced with clear indications Mejia was in danger, PA Moore decided he needed to go to an outside hospital. At 1 p.m. on Jan. 15, 2011, an ambulance ferried Ricardo Mejia downtown to Walla Walla's Providence St. Mary Medical Center. It would be his last day in prison. And his last full day of life.

St. Mary doctors, finding a severely ill man in their emergency room, began running tests.

Within a short time, they concluded Mejia, now in shock, needed specialized emergency care they were not equipped to deliver. He was a stretcher-ful of ailments, including peritonitis, proctitis, sepsis, and ulcerative colitis. Most crucial, doctors discovered necrotizing bilateral tonsillitis. A flesh-eating disease had set in.

Doctors alerted the state medical airlift service, and Mejia was hurried to Walla Walla Regional Airport and put aboard a small plane. By 6 p.m. he was in the air, flying over the prison, headed to Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, one of the region's biggest hospitals and specialty-care centers.

Alerted in advance, Sacred Heart doctors were ready when Mejia was wheeled in. He was immediately prepared for surgery, and doctors realized they'd have to cut away infected sections of his body. He had Fournier's gangrene, a critical infection of the genitalia. Capable of developing quickly, within hours, it causes severe pain in the penis and scrotum and progresses toward a spreading rot that to necrosis—the death of tissue.

And that contributing conditions were also causing Mejia's kidneys to shut down. The medical team had no alternatives in surgery, and began removing his rectum and large por-

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POUND OF FLESH

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tions of his buttocks.

It was a long, challenging debridement of the infected areas. And it came too late. At 2:02 the next morning, Jan. 16, 2011, state inmate Ricardo Mejia—a patient who'd been denied admittance to the prison infirmary 16 hours earlier—was pronounced dead.

Mejia's death didn't make the news. But it mattered to his family at least, including his two children by separate mothers in Skagit County and his surrogate mom, as April Sorias calls herself.

A counselor in a Skagit work-training program, Sorias first met Mejia when he was a teen when he was born in trouble. Born a U.S. citizen, Mejia was abandoned by his birth mom when he was young and raised by others, spending much of his time on the street. Young Mejia came to confide in Sorias, and the two struck up a familial relationship. As his designated outside prison contact, she was first to get the bad-news phone call from Spokane early on the morning he died.

"It was the hospital chaplain," Sorias recalls. "At first I didn't know he was saying Richard had died. I couldn't understand what this thing was that had happened. Then he said—I can't forget the words—'This is the worst case of medical negligence we've ever seen.'"

But, as Sorias would find out, it happened within a system not prone to publicize its mistakes or generate public sympathy for its inmates. After all, Mejia, a one-time street gangster known as L.T.J. Jokes, entered prison with 17 felonies on his record. He'd already done a two-year prison stretch for discharging a weapon in public during a Mount Vernon gang dispute in 2005. In 2009, he was returned to custody, this time sent to the hard-time Walls for a string of crimes including the murder of an elderly woman.

In September 2007, Mejia, then 23 of Sedro-Woolley, was sought for burglary, assault, car theft, and eluding deputies. With two female accomplices, he was looting a home outside Burlington when the homeowner walked in. The three fled in a car and eluded police in a mad chase, hitting speeds of up to 90 mph and crashing the car in a cornfield. The women were nabbed but Mejia got away, running to a nearby home.

There he encountered an 84-year-old woman named Clara Thorp and demanded her car keys. She had no car. An enraged Mejia pushed the frail lady to the floor and ran to a second home nearby where he was able to commandeer a car and escape. Officers found that car crashed in west Mount Vernon, but Mejia was gone again. Two days later, attempting to break into a vehicle in Mount Vernon, he was spotted by an officer. After a standoff in which Mejia climbed a structure and resisted arrest—he was Tased six times in a struggle—police took him into custody.

Three months later, the elderly woman died.

Clara Thorp had been on the floor, undiscovered, for more than an hour, and was hospitalized with a broken pelvis. A few days later she also suffered a heart attack. She ended up disabled, living in a senior care center, turning 85, and never regaining her health. On Jan. 11, 2008, she died from pneumonia stemming from her injuries, the medical examiner ruled, labeling the death a homicide. By law, a death that occurs during the commission of a felony can be charged as a murder. Skagit prosecutors therein refilled 14 felony charges altogether against Mejia, including first-degree murder, accusing him of exhibiting "deliberate cruelty" in his attack on the defenseless Thorp.

Mejia, who faced the possibility of life in prison, mulled over his chances as the case dragged out for a year. Sorias, his adopted mom, says "I told him, 'You have to plead guilty.' He didn't intend to kill her. But he had to take responsibility for what happened." Mejia agreed to a plea bargain. The case was winnowed down to seven felonies and the murder charge dropped to second-degree.

In June 2009, Mejia was sentenced to 34 years. "For a 24-year-old man, this criminal record could be the biggest one I've ever seen," said Skagit County Superior Court Judge John Meyer, according to a report in the *Skagit Valley Herald*. Clara Thorp's son, granddaughter, and great-grandson were in the courtroom and read a statement about Thorp's assault and death, recalling the agony of having "watched her go

through so much pain she didn't deserve."

Mejia, contrite, apologized for his life of crime, drugs, and gang-banging. "I know I'm a monster," he told Thorp's family. "I know you guys hate me. I hate myself for the things I've done." Says mom Sorias: "There was never a minute, from the day of her death to the day of his death, that he wasn't sorry for what he did."

As a career criminal, Mejia wasn't a likely candidate to change his life by doing another prison stretch. Still, he had hope: If he'd completed his full term and been released, he'd have been 58. At least he wasn't a lifer, nor had he been condemned to death.

Not officially anyway. As it turned out, Mejia, like his victim, went through pain he didn't deserve, serving a capital sentence he wasn't given. Unlike Clara Thorp, however, no one would be punished for his death.

An autopsy ordered by the state determined Richard Mejia died of blood poisoning and septic shock resulting from the flesh-eating disease and rectal infection. The death raised concerns at the state Department of Health, and inspectors began prying prison medical records and asking questions.

In a May 2011 report, the department found the prison had failed to provide "a formalized process for continuity of care and supervision." Medical staff was not prepared, and supervisors were missing in action. There was only informal oversight of mid-level care providers, such as physician's assistants, and a lack of case discussion between line staff and the prison's medical director, Dr. James Edwards.

In Mejia's case, nurses had repeatedly failed to obtain his vital signs and contacted the on-call doctor

or PA when those signs were out of whack—and even then there was a lack of urgent response, investigators found. On January 15, the day Mejia ended up being rushed to the hospital, the nurse visiting his cell that early morning recorded his heart rate at 154—and merely made an appointment for him to see a doctor three hours later. Help should have come immediately.

To critics of the prison medical-care system, the Mejia case sounded eerily familiar. In 2004, Charles Manning, an inmate at Stafford Creek Correctional Center outside Aberdeen, was diagnosed as having an allergic reaction to Robitussin, the cold medicine. He endured two days of pain in the prison infirmary, treated with an ice pack and medications. He was then belatedly diagnosed with an infection and was transferred to Grays Harbor Community Hospital. There, emergency doctors determined—much as the Walla Walla and Spokane doctors did in Mejia's case—that Manning had *Fournier's gangrene*.

To save his life, the Aberdeen doctors removed his genitals and portions of flesh. Unlike Mejia, Manning survived. But he was left disfigured and disabled. As *Prison Legal News* put it in a report, "Charlie Manning, doing 13 months after a drunken argument with a neighbor, left prison with no penis."

Such cases are costly not only to the victims but to taxpayers—Manning, for example, later sued for damages, accepting a \$300,000 settlement from the state in 2008. (In one of the most costly state cases, Gertrude Banwo, 41, died of the Washington Corrections Center for Women in Puyallup of a perforated chronic peptic ulcer and acute peritonitis. In 1994, her family was awarded \$630,000 due to state negligence).

"Prison doctors are not necessarily going to be

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the best practitioners available," Paul Wright says in a purposeful understatement. "The state DOC has a long history of employing doctors with disciplinary histories and not sanctioning them even when they kill, and keeping them on the payroll."

And Wright would know. Some of those doctors treated him. Wright was a state prison inmate for 17 years, convicted of the murder of a drug dealer. Among those who tended him was a dentist named Joel Driven. In one example of his care, according to state investigators, the 72-year-old dentist wrenched out part of a McNeil Island inmate's jawbone rather than the tooth he intended to pull. That tore open the roof of the inmate's mouth, causing Driven to panic as the prisoner faced the likelihood of bleeding to death. A second dentist also froze, as did a dental assistant. Another assistant used the day taking over Driven's patient, shouting commands to the doctor, and calling for emergency aid. She told investigators that what she witnessed was "torture . . . barbaric." In 2007, Driven was let go and his license revoked.

Wright, who served his time and went on to found *Prison Legal News* and campaign for prisoner rights, lays the 10-year-old Manning case should have been a turning point for corrections medical reform. But "Whatever they did [after that settlement], if they did anything, obviously

didn't help Ricardo Mejia."

Wright's umbrella organization, the Human Rights Defense Center of Lake Worth, Florida, got interested in Mejia's case. Started on a \$50 budget with an all-volunteer grassroots base, the center has today become a 501(c)(3) organization with 10 full-time employees including three staff attorneys. It specializes in litigation and advocacy for prisoners.

"Manning was crippled and Mejia killed because of the sheer neglect and ineptitude of DOC medical staff," Wright says. "This is an ongoing story that the state DOC."

It was a story that Mejia's mom, Soria, wasn't getting in full, she says. "It was so difficult to get at the truth. The state wouldn't provide public records. One state records clerk I got to know said, 'of the record to me,' This isn't normal. These records should be available. You need to get an attorney." She did.

In April last year, Wright's defense center filed a legal tort claim for damages against the state for the medical failures leading to Mejia's death. It was brought on behalf of Soria and Mejia's two children, ages 12 and 7. Jesse Wing, the lead attorney in the claim, from Seattle law firm MacDonald Hoague & Bayless, says "Mr. Mejia's case illustrates something worse than inadequate care. He suffered not just incompetent care, but obvious indifference to his serious pain and illness. This I don't care if you live or die attitude is at odds with the most basic duty of a health-care provider and of the Hippocratic oath."

The claim focuses particularly on the role

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 17



In April, Richard Mejia's family received \$740,000 for the 26-year-old's botched treatment.

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POUND OF FLESH

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of Moore, the physician's assistant would be reluctant to admit Mejia as an inpatient. Prison medical director Edwards told state investigators that Moore "tends not to listen to nurses... [he] irritates and frustrates" them. But the prisoners' health-care administrator, said Moore was "at times... on the edge with his care decisions," and that at one point she opted not to renew his then-patient contract. But after Rima moved on to another job, her replacement rehired Moore, with Edwards' approval, full-time.

One nurse recalled that on the day Mejia would eventually be rushed to an outside hospital, she had repeatedly beseeched Moore to admit him as an inpatient. Mejia had arrived in a wheelchair in great pain, his heart racing. Another nurse said Mejia was so obviously septic he "could go south in a hurry," yet "Mr. Moore was sitting there, allowing the patient to wait 45 minutes while no treatment orders or medication was given."

About the time the claim was filed, the state Medical Quality Assurance Commission—responding to a separate complaint filed by Wright's group—lodged charges against Moore, claiming his care may have constituted medical "incompetence, negligence, or malpractice." He failed to recognize a life-threatening condition, the commission said, and lacked concern when urgency was called for.

Moore didn't take much time to settle the complaint. And why not? His penalty was to write a paper about his error. In what it calls an informal disposition, the commission ordered Moore to study up on sepsis, septic, and necrotizing fasciitis, then compose 1,000 words on those topics. He'd also have to make a class-like presentation to others on the prison medical team, and would have to reimburse the commission for costs, \$750. "It was a slap on the wrist," says Mejia attorney Wing.

In January of this year, the charges against Moore were formally withdrawn, although he still must comply with the writing and educational stipulations of the disposition.

That same month, having received no answer to the claim filed against the state, Wright's group went to court and formally filed a lawsuit against the Department of Corrections on behalf of Mejia's death. In the suit, attorneys alleged that Mejia "died a horrible and painful death at age 26... [his] medical providers ignored obvious signs of infection and serious medical illness, and he literally rotted to death." Timely diagnoses and treatment would have spared his life and the pain he suffered, the suit claims, citing mistakes turned up by the Health Department probe.

Four months later, in April, the DOC agreed to settle.

The department conceded some responsibility for Mejia's painful death. It agreed to pay \$740,000 to his family, like a record amount in such a case. The department also said it had made some changes in its prison medical operations to comply with the Health Department's findings, including assigning inmates to doctors, expanding dialogue between staff and supervi-

sors, and informing staff in more detail about flesh-eating bacteria. But the state admitted to no legal wrongdoing in Mejia's death.

Nonetheless, as in the earlier flesh-eating case, it was a costly mistake in life and money that could have been avoided, says Paul Wright. "The common theme here is the DOC botched the diagnoses until it was too late—and remember, these are deep-tissue bacteria that take at least a week to develop to the killer phase, and as soon as these men were

taken to a hospital, the ER doctors diagnosed them almost immediately.

"I think the most compelling story is the bigger issue of inadequate medical care," Wright says. "The DOC spends over \$100 million a year on [care] and prisoners still die gruesome deaths from easily diagnosed illnesses."

Wright says his organization expects to bring other suits in the future. Unfortunately, he says,

there will be a need for them.

As for April Soria, she didn't share in the

settlement. "She is just a very good person who tried to help him and his family," says attorney Wing, "so the settlement money went to his children."

Two weeks ago, Moore showed up at a medical-commission hearing to see how he has complied with settlement stipulations. Wing, who also attended, said "a state lawyer told us afterwards that a purpose of the hearing was for the board to see Mr. Moore's demeanor when discussing care of patients. We pointed out that Mr. Moore's demeanor did not seem appropriate under the circumstances. He did not show any sense of responsibility for the death of Mr. Mejia or even that he was discussing the death of a human being at the hearing." But apparently Moore received the state's blessings. He remains a practicing, full-time PA at the state pen. **W**

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The drinkable Landscape

Brewers create beers based on Seattle hikes.

BY MEGAN HILL

Eric Steen hands me a lime-green needle he's gently plucked off a low-hanging branch of a towering Sitka spruce in Seward Park. I tentatively nibble as little as possible, certain I'm about to be smacked in the palate with resin and bitter sap. But the soft needle's tastes of sweet citrus with floral notes, the piney finish more pleasant than bitter.

For Steen, those delicate spruce tips are potential to make some pretty great beer.

I've joined him, along with 10 or so others, for a hike through Seward Park as part of a program called Beers Made by Walking, which Steen founded and directs. The program gathers brewers and beer aficionados in local parks to learn about edible native plants. The brewers then use the walk as inspiration for beer-making; each participating brewer is tasked with creating a beer using locally foraged ingredients in time for a release party that doubles as a fundraiser for a local environmental organization.

Steen has organized events in Portland (where he lives), Colorado, and now Seattle. To date, his program has partnered with more than 45 brewers, resulting in 55 beers that aim to give those who imbibe them a sense of place, "bottling the forest or meadow that inspired the flavors. Steen, who's also an artist, calls it a "drinkable landscape portrait." This hike kicks off the Seattle series with Epic Ales and Woodinville's Brickyard Brewing. Steen's inspiration for his program came from a "combined interest in craft beer and the outdoors," he later tells me. In 2009 he dropped a canoe in the Yukon River with a friend who taught him about the native plants they saw along the way. He later learned about *Woodinville's Bison Brewing*, which brews a line of historic beers with native plants like leather flower, gale, Scottish pine, and seaweed, and wanted to combine his newfound interest in native plants with his love of locally inspired beers. Beers Made by Walking was born in 2011 in Colorado Springs.

We gather at a tent near the start of Trail #3, which cuts into the center of the deeply wooded peninsula. The trail disappears into the shaded old growth before us.

Program managers Amy Kaiser and Dani Kendall start the hike with a brief overview of Friends of the Cedar River, the partnering organization and fundraiser beneficiary. She tells us the watershed covers a swath of the greater Puget Sound area that includes more than 30 cities, Seattle among them. It provides about one million residents of King County with some of the world's cleanest drinking—and beer-making—water.

Then we venture into the woods. Kaiser stops us after just a few yards to point out the first of many plants we'll see on the walk: thimbleberry, with its exceedingly soft leaves the shape of a maple tree's ("Nature's toilet paper," one participant calls it), and beaked hazelnut, with its round leaves and long clusters of brownish yellow flowers drooping in a formation called



COURTESY BEERS MADE BY WALKING

Beer lovers' field notes begin.

a catkin. At every stop she lets us try our hand at identifying the plant using booklets she's provided; she then tells us its uses, like edibility or medicinal properties.

Between stops, talk turns to beer. One participant, an active homebrewer, is gleaming tips from Steen about how many berries it would take to make a batch of homebrew and picking. Ean Forgette's brain about his work as the owner and brewer at Brickyard Brewing. I'm alternately shooting the shit with Cody Morris, the mastermind behind Epic Ales brewery, who is here with his wife and his dog, and who tells me things are finally settling down at his Gastropub after all the recent press turned the place into a madhouse of visitors. He also hints at plans for expansion with another large brewer. I make a mental note to visit again soon.

Others want to know more about foraging from Steen and Kaiser, about the rules of thumb governing picking from nature for brewers and hobbyists. Steen tells us we can't forage in city parks, and that brewers will need to source commercially from licensed vendors. He says they aren't limited to using the exact species of what we find on the hike, noting that in some cases it's better to go with a "similar, adjacent ingredient rather than the exact one we saw" if, say, the brewer is after native blackberries but can only find Himalayan blackberries to buy. In short, this hike is meant to be inspirational and informative, rather than bouffant.

We identify native trailing blackberries from their blackish stems that creep along the ground, forming a ground cover beneath an invasive Himalayan blackberry, its flower petals fading as fruit begins to form. A bright-pink *Rosa rosea* provides color among all the green, its flowers a perfect complement in a salad, perhaps. Sword ferns jab through the undergrowth, their broad

fronds traditionally used by native tribes to dry salmon. An Oregon grape's holly-like leaves cup clusters of purple fruit. A Western red cedar is a massive sentinel excavated in fibrous red bark the natives used to make canoes and smoke salmon. I'm starting to pick up on details of the forest that I've never noticed in my years of Northwest hiking.

But what about the booze? Morris and Forgette seem to be taking it all in, flipping through their species-identification booklets and listening intently. I wonder if their beer brains are feeling inspired.

"I've not brewed with something from the forest before," Forgette tells me later. "I used to do tons of hiking and camping, but I was not educated in the edibles of the forest. The program and the beer are an exciting challenge. Hopefully it'll also get a lot more people thinking about their immediate and forest environment as a living edible landscape instead of just a weekend destination." Morris, for his part, has sourced from the landscape, making beer with beets, shiitake mushrooms, and huckleberries.

Forgette says he's not sure yet what type of beer he'll brew but hopes to use a fall seasonal base—like a brown ale or stout—and go from there.

"In terms of beer I learned that all sorts of things could be allowable to a certain degree in different styles of beer, including berries, fern shoots, tree bark or mushrooms," he says.

Perhaps he'll call it Seward Park Stout. The next hike with Beers Made by Walking will be held on Tues. July 22 from 2 to 5 p.m. at Discovery Park, with Fremont Brewing and Naked City Brewery. The event is free but requires a prior sign-up. Tickets become available the week before the hike on beersmadebywalking.com.

food@seattleweekly.com

Food News

BY MEGAN HILL

A new Korean restaurant is on its way to Pioneer Square in early-to-mid-2015. **GIRIN**, a project of Steven Han & Co. (the men behind Momi, Umi Sake House, and Kushibar), "will bring the tradition, innovation, and dynamic flavor profiles of Korean cuisine to Pioneer Square while simultaneously incorporating a rich variety of local, Pacific Northwest ingredients," according to a press release. Chef Brandon Kirksey will be at the helm with seasonal bibimbab, nose-to-tail proteins butchered and cured in-house, local fish and shellfish, and a few vegetarian options, too.

Seth Sempere of Spur Gastropub will represent Seattle as he competes in the nationwide finale of Bombay Sapphire's Most Imaginative Bartender Competition. Sempere's "Time Has Its Revenges" cocktail was selected for top honors based on appearance, aroma, imagination, and taste. The finals will be held in Las Vegas in September.

Chef Vuong Loc and wife Tricia are planning to open **Pomero** in Fremont in a few weeks. Fare will be French meets Northwest, and the restaurant will be equipped with a wood-fired grill.

Two-week-old **Parlor Live Seattle**, a comedy club, restaurant, and bar, has added a happy hour. The extensive menu lists more than 25 items at half price and 35 drink specials. It's available daily from 2 to 7 p.m. on Mon. 10 p.m. to close Sunday through Thursday. morningfoodnews@seattleweekly.com

The Weekly Dish

Summer Sausage and Salsón

BY NICOLE SPRINKLE

One of my favorite things to grill in the summer is sausage and peppers—but not just any sausage. At the Ballard Farmers Market on Sunday I bought a couple large links of Sea Breeze Farm's "Moroccan Sausage," which is seasoned with white wine, buttermilk, allspice, preserved lemon, clementine, and a Baharat spice mixture (used in Arab cuisine), consisting of, in this case, cumin, coriander, chive, cardamom, nutmeg, cinnamon, and paprika.

Every bite of the deep rich, baking-spice-accented sausage was mouthwatering, its color beautifully dark against the bright-red peppers and the yellow summer squash (the sweetness of the veggies was also an excellent counterpoint). It's such a simple thing to make, yet looks so bright and beautiful when served. To bring it all together, as a good wine or beer should, I paired the meal with Propolis Brewing's "Belmont" Saison with elderflowers and Brett. The sour beer hit the right third note, and, served in a wine glass, made the whole rustic presentation a bit elegant. You can also find the sausages at the U District Farmers Market on Saturdays or at the farm's restaurant and retail space, *La Boucherie*, on Vishon. nisprinkle@seattleweekly.com



PHOTO: NICOLE SPRINKLE

Connect to Great Food

A new South Park bridge lets you plug back in to what's cooking in South Seattle.

BY PATRICK HUTCHISON

On June 29, the long-awaited South Park Bridge finally opened, spanning the Mackinac-approved Duwamish Waterway and connecting the southern boundary of Georgetown to the rarely explored South Park. This is good for two reasons. One, it eases the commuting woes of a neighborhood which has been forced to tangle with a rabbit hole of highway detours, where it seems that with every turn you wind up at the dump. And two, because it allows much easier access to some fantastic places to eat.

For those who love Mexican food, strolling down South Park's 14th Avenue (where the bridge connects) is like being the world's greatest neon fan walking down the Vegas strip. Take your pick between well-established sit-downs like *Muy Macho* (my favorite), *Jalisco*, and *Juan Colorado* and taco-truck-style places like the newly opened *Mi Fondita del Itamo*, where a plate of tacos al pastor is perfectly matched with a fresh *jamaica* (pronounced hah-NY-kah, a hibiscus juice).

But the best Mexican culinary delights

are found at *Pastereria y Panaderia La Ideal*, just a few blocks south on 14th. Fresh baked goods pour out of ovens all day. My bread (bolillos I would later use to make tortas), bought at 7 p.m., was almost too hot to hold. For a sweet treat, grab a *concha* "shell," a house specialty that tastes like a Hawaiian sweet roll with a subtle sugar topping. It's so soft you'll wonder if you've even bitten into it. Added bonus: Nearly nothing here costs over a dollar. I paid for most things with pocket change like it was 1953 and I was at a soda fountain with all my keen pals.

But South Park isn't just burritos and hot sauce. Well-established neighborhood favorite *Napoli Pizzeria* has been owned and operated by the same family at the same location since 1981. I was delighted to find that was also the last year they considered the decor: paper plates, pitchers of beer, metal chairs, and fluorescent-lit laminate tables. Memories of childhood soccer pizza parties came flooding back as I stepped in and looked up at the quintessential plastic menu board, spelling out the simple offerings in tiny black letters. Here you'll find all the classics: hoagies, spaghetti, cannelloni, and pizza. Don't expect gluten-free crust or basil leaves as topping options either, only the usual: extra cheese, anchovies, and Canadian bacon to name a few.

In the parking lot adjacent to Napoli is one of South Park's newest additions, *Via Vadi Caffe*, a neighborhood coffee shop that serves exactly what you expect—lattes, espresso, and fresh-



SHUTTERSTOCK/STEFANO



SHUTTERSTOCK/STEFANO

Top: Tossing a pie at Napoli Pizzeria. Bottom left: Via Vadi Caffe joins the mix. Bottom right: Mexican sweet rolls at Pastereria y Panaderia La Ideal.



SHUTTERSTOCK/STEFANO

baked pastries—but better than you expected.

Finally we come to the real reason I love South Park: *Loretta's Northwest*. It happened upon it by chance on one of my monthly attempts to find the SoDo transfer station, and was convinced I had stumbled across the city's greatest, oldest, most unknown bar. Finding out that it was both newish and fairly well-known dampened my excitement only marginally.

Formerly a pub called Kelly's, *Loretta's* was bought and updated by the owner of Georgetown's 9th Hammer, but you'd be hard-pressed to figure out it hadn't been *Loretta's* for decades. Dim lighting, stiff drinks, tavern steaks and burgers on the menu, *Mariners* on the TV—this is the sort of place you come every day after well-

ing skyscrapers or driving tugboats up mountains. But the best part is the latest addition and most recognizable difference between Kelly's and *Loretta's*: a back patio bar, eclectically decorated, whose centerpiece is an old Airstream trailer. If tucking into a rib-eye washed down with a tall glass of whiskey in the back of an Airstream is the sort of experience Seattle bars are headed toward, I think we're all for OK.

For now, South Park is a slice of nostalgia with a bit of flair here and there. If you're willing to head to Georgetown, take the extra five minutes to jump over the new bridge and see what it's like before someone takes notice and starts dumping development through their new artery. **H**

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Each show is carefully curated to ensure the best mix of handmade designer crafts & arts. This bi-annual show features over 130 vendors excelling in the community. Over the course of a decade UCU has garnered so much attention that over 12,000 fans swarm to the show over the weekend.

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A NOTE FROM OUR ORGANIZERS



Kristin Rask



Lindsey Ross

We all know the benefits of shopping local around: you're keeping your money circulating in the local economy, you're directly supporting others and their families, and you get to interact with the maker of whatever you're purchasing—which is a bonus whether your biggest concern is the quality of the product, the sourcing of the materials, the creative process, or just making a connection with someone in your community.

By shopping at UCU, you have the chance to shop local, on a huge scale! We've done all the legwork of getting all these incredible crafters and designers under one roof, so you can have the one-stop-shop experience, without the big box store.

CRAFTY AUTHOR BOOK SIGNINGS



Hannah Viano

S is for Salmon

In this beautiful ABC book, C is for Crab; D is for Douglas fir; and E is for Eagle. Based on Pacific Northwest artist Hannah Viano's regionally themed paper-cut art, this lovely children's book sheds a new light on the ABCs that will appeal to young and old alike. Fans of Nikki McClure and Kate Endle will appreciate the beautiful handmade appeal of this book.



Blair Stucker

Wise Craft

Wise Craft is a guide to the homemade life, turning old things into special new objects that enhance the home. Based on the popular blog of the same name, this guide focuses on creating a homemade atmosphere that reflects your life, without spending a fortune. Instead of throwing away old shirts and boring dishes, or passing up thrift store finds that aren't quite right, author Blair Stucker teaches how to remake, adding special touches to make them work for her home—and yours.



Jennifer Shea

Trophy Cupcakes and Parties!

Seattle's favorite cupcake bakery, Trophy Cupcakes and Party, is adored for its mouthwatering cupcakes and charming party favors. It's also the go-to place for anyone looking to throw a phenomenal celebration, and now their recipes and party secrets are yours in this essential guide for every occasion. Inside are recipes for Trophy's most prized flavor—red velvet!—as well as their popular everyday flavors like salted caramel and triple chocolate, and unique ones such as piña colada, and a gluten-free orange almond rose. You'll also get the basics on how to dream up party themes, create DIY crafts, as well as decorating and entertaining ideas, and insider baking and frosting tips, all from Trophy founder Jennifer Shea.



Amy Pennington

Fresh Pantry: Eat Seasonally, Cook Smart, & Learn to Love Your Vegetables

As anyone trying to eat locally all year long knows, the winter gets difficult. Walking the local aisles of a well-stocked produce section or around your neighborhood farmers market, you find few options onions, cabbage, and kale, oh my! From January to December, *Fresh Pantry* features 120 creative yet healthy and doable recipes centered on 12 choice seasonal vegetables and fruits; accessible and clever advice on growing, storing, and using seasonal ingredients; lush and inspirational photographs; detailed resources for sustainable eating; and the exuberant energy that marked Pennington's first book.



Molly Wizenberg

Delancey: A Man, a Woman, a Restaurant, a Marriage

In this funny, frank, tender memoir and New York Times bestseller, the author of *A Homemade Life* and the blog *Orangette* recounts how opening a restaurant sparked the first crisis of her young marriage.

When Molly Wizenberg married Brandon Pettit, he was a trained composer with a handful of offbeat interests. So when Brandon decided to open a pizza restaurant, Molly was supportive—not because she wanted him to do it, but because the idea was so far-fetched that she didn't think he would. Before she knew it, he'd signed a lease on a space. The restaurant, *Delancey*, was going to be a reality, and all of Molly's assumptions about her marriage were about to change.

With evocative photos by Molly and twenty new recipes for the kind of simple, delicious food that chefs eat at home, *Delancey* is a moving and honest account of two young people learning to give in and let go in order to grow together.

BOOK SIGNING SCHEDULE

SATURDAY

Molly Wizenberg	12pm-1pm
Jennifer Shea	1pm-2pm
Blair Stucker	2pm-3pm
Amy Pennington	3pm-4pm

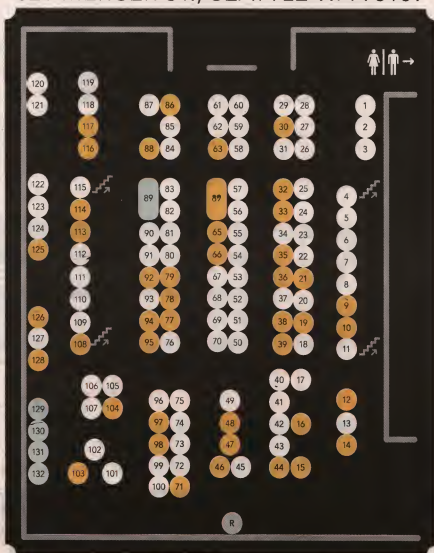
SUNDAY

Hannah Viano	3pm-4pm
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A Summer Fling With White Wine



There is a widespread and largely inaccurate belief that sommeliers and other wine directors are total snobs about wine. While there is some truth to that—often reinforced by particularly arrogant members of the industry—it's also true that most wine experts I know love drinking cheap whites and roses outside during the summer. Sometimes we even put ice cubes and soda water in our glasses!

After all, summer wines are a little summer romance: They may not last forever, they might be a bit superficial, but they're remembered fondly and are a hell of a good time. Seriously, intellectual, meaningful wine makes sense in cold, gray, contemplative months, but when the sun shines, it's time to cut loose, have fun, and find what we wine professionals call "porch pounders." Trust me, it's a very technical term.

Fortunately, we live in a golden age of inexpensive and utterly quaffable whites and roses from virtually all corners of the globe. The French have been exporting veritable tankers of well-priced roses from the Languedoc (in particular the regions of Minervois and Corbières), the Loire Valley, and pretty much the entire country. Let's say that French wine seems too pretentious for you, though. Fortunately, most of the rest of Europe has been chugging truly heroic quantities of perfectly decent white wine for centuries. The Italians in particular are masters of the style. Sure, you might be familiar with pinot grigio, but there are so many wonderful light, crisp whites to try. In particular, veracino, vermentino, and verdicchio (yes, an awful lot of V's) can all be found for \$10-\$12 on most store shelves.

Spain and Portugal get in on the act as well: you might be familiar with Portuguese vinho verde or the Spanish albariño, but the Spanish txakoli (pronounced cha-coh-lee) is a Basque wine with bright acidity and a slight effervescence that's reminiscent of vinho verde. It too is very reasonably priced, though you might need to go to a specialty shop to find it.

One area where you might call me a snob: It's really hard for me to find domestic whites and roses that can match Europe's combination of drinkability and price. Sometimes centuries of tradition and experience does give a region an advantage, and while the U.S. will surely catch up at some point (and mostly has in most other styles), I don't want to wait for some far-distant summer. I want to drink wine in the sun now!

Inexpensive whites and roses are also the perfect basis for one of my absolute favorite summer drinks: sangria. While it's most commonly made with red wine, I find it even more delightful when it's lighter and more refreshing. Whites and roses lend themselves to some of Washington's most delicious produce, including white peaches, Rainier cherries, and apricots. Sprinkle in a few fresh strawberries or raspberries and a splash or two of an inexpensive French or Spanish brandy, and you are ready to grab your summer from the glass. **A2**

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Next Stop, DIY-Ville

The unlikely path of Chicago outsider artist and musician Willis Earl Beal takes a Northwest turn.

BY VERNAL COLEMAN



Beal sought seduction, and found it in his forested new home.

The very last thing Willis Earl Beal would want me to include in his introduction would be an allusion to Robert Johnson. Since he emerged a few years back as a DIY purveyor of idiosyncratic soul, Beal has bridled at comparisons to the Mississippi axeman who, according to folklore, created the blues at a certain crossroads.

Thing is, when I met the Chicago native this past winter, Beal was at just such a junction, he explained. He and his wife had recently moved from New York to Lacey, Wash., the latest stop on his drift toward creative liberty—or possibly back to artistic obscurity.

He had no plan or desire to promote his then-latest album, *Nobody Knows*, by touring, he told me. His relationship with the well-regarded indie label XL Recordings, which had helped propel him from semi-homeless unknown to *New York Times*-reviewed act, had begun to fray. He was chafing at the commercialization of his music and the demands of touring. (He played locally at Barboza's opening in 2012, the same year he kicked a Dutch fan in the face and was detained by police.) He'd even begun wearing a black fabric mask to hide behind onstage.

More worrisome: His \$145,000 advance had dwindled to \$6,000. Then, without the label's support, he self-released *A Place That Doesn't Exist*, a ragged eight-track EP in January, soon after moving to the Northwest.

"It's almost like *Nobody Knows* was my industry record, and *A Place That Doesn't Exist* is my anti-industry record."

I first met Beal on Capitol Hill, having spotted his face in the crowd. He looked lost. And familiar. So I ask him, "Has anyone ever told you that you look a lot like a singer named Willis Earl Beal?"

"Yes, and thank you," he says.

"Are you Willis Earl Beal?"

There's a pause as he weighs his answer, then leans down his guard. "Yes."

We spent the rest of the afternoon at Linda's Tavern. Take me to where there are people with tattoos and liquor, he'd asked. A few hours before the start of happy hour, the place was empty. At the whiskey shots and rounds of beer did their work, our five-hour talk didn't feel like such an awkward imposition. He wanted to talk. He needed to vent. We discussed topics up to and including his resistance to the classification of his music and his appreciation for the works of feral youth and rapper Chief Keef.

"I don't want people to hear 'back' when they listen to my music, I want them to hear me," he says. "All of these people are just grouping me

together with these blues artists. I reject that. I reject being labeled. That's why I envy people like Chief Keef, because he doesn't care. He can just be himself and not deal with other people labeling or characterizing his music. I just want to express my reality just like him."

The reality of Beal's hardscrabble life is complicated and genre-averse. He's been homeless; he's worked in fast food and for FedEx. He writes poetry, draws, and identifies with Charles Bukowski, Nick Cave, and Tom Waits. After a short stint in the Army followed by a medical crisis, he ended up in Albuquerque with a girlfriend, where he began to write songs with thrift-store guitars and karaoke machines. He publicized his music with hand-made fliers, one of which came to the attention of *Foetus* magazine editor Davy Rothbart, who published a 2011 collection of Beal's music and writings. XL took notice of Beal, then back in Chicago, and his 2012 lo-fi album *Acoustamatic* drew early national attention and praise. Soon he was his touring and recording with Cat Power.

Two years later, Beal sounds exalted and jaded by his relatively brief music-biz career. "I loved *Nobody Knows*, but I was done with it," he tells me. "It's almost like *Nobody Knows* was my industry record, and *A Place That Doesn't Exist* is my anti-industry record. There's an

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

ThisWeek's PickList

WEDNESDAY, JULY 9
Yellow Fish/Epic Durational Performance Festival

Gosti and Ryan Law at last year's fest.

PHOTO BY BENJAMIN LAM

A performance that lasts at least an hour, but not longer than two days—these are the only real criteria for this collection of time-based artworks. The rest is up to a rotating cast (including Gender Tender, Mark Haim, Babette Pondichien, McGentry, and Molly Sides), who will come and go for almost a month (through August 2). Alice Gosti directs the fest, which begins today with something called *The House of ia*. Opening remarks and a reception follow at 6 p.m. Thursday: On Friday, *The Pendleton House performs* (1:30–6 p.m.), followed by *Gender Tender* on Saturday (again 1:30–6 p.m.). A related program of durational movies screens at Northwest Film Forum on Mon., July 14, with details still pending. **Hedreen Gallery, Leo Center for the Arts (Seattle University, 12th Ave. & Marion St.), facebook.com/yellowfishfestival. Free. 1:30–6 p.m. SANDRA KURTZ**

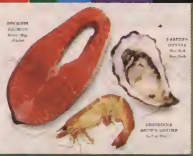
THURSDAY, JULY 10
Wooden O

Again Seattle Shakespeare Company is committed to free outdoor productions of the Bard, and this summer's offerings are *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Julius Caesar*. The former, obviously, is a little more family-friendly, with Jason Marr and Connor Neddersen, respectively, as BF's Proteus and Valentine, whose parting triggers a series of love notes, saucy servants, disapproving fathers, misplaced affections, impudent maids, mistaken identities, lovable brigands, premature announcements of death, and cross-dressing. David Quicksall directs. As for the Roman tragedy *Julius Caesar*, directed by Vanessa Miller, this will be an all-female production, with Therese Dickinson as the doomed overreaching tyrant, Suzanne Bouchard as Brutus, and Amy Thone as Cassius/Thullius. *Julius Caesar* debuts in Issaquah, while *Two Gentlemen* bows on Mercer Island. (Other performance locations, through August 10, will include Volunteer Park, Seattle Center, Lynnwood, Sammamish, Edmonds, and

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

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[7/10] Paul Greenberg
Saving Local Seafood



[7/16] John Foreman
Big Data's Possibilities
and Our Future



[7/19] Verse Chapter Verse
Bryan Lee O'Malley,
Paul Constant, and Tacocat
Seconds



[7/22] Lynn Sherr
The Real Sally Field

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» FROM PAGE 23

Wooden O
brings the
Bard
outdoors.



Des Moines.) Issaquah Community Center, 301 Rainier Blvd. S., and Luther Burbank Park, 2040 84th Ave. S.E. (Mercer Island). Both 7 p.m. seattleshakespeare.org. BRIAN MILLER

**FRIDAY, JULY 11
DANCE THIS!**

Some kids go to summer camp and make a lanyard; this group of young dancers studies with a variety of professional teachers and choreographers and winds up onstage, creating a performance that threatens to blow the roof off the theater. Under the direction of Mark Haim, this year's featured performers include Grassano Music & Dance with Etienne Kalpo (from Benin), Zimbabwe's Jimu Makumbandi, Kalahi Dance Company (from the Philippines), and local troops NW Tap Connection and Spectrum Dance Theater. **The Moore, 1932 Second Ave. 877-784-4848, stgpresent.com. \$10-\$21. 7:30 p.m. (Repeats Sat.) SANDRA KURTZ**

**SATURDAY, JULY 12
Fremont Outdoor Movies**



**Fremont Outdoor Movies begins with
The Royal Tenenbaums**

This popular air-fresco screening series begins with a free movie, courtesy of Talenti Gelato, which will probably be offering samples. Back in 2001, I wrote about what kind of cancer Wes Anderson would enjoy after *The Royal Tenenbaums*, besides gathering what would almost become a repository company of actors for him, the movie crystallized a number of key themes to recur in his later works. As in *Mourning Glory*, there's a longing for the protected childhood. As in *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, architecture provides a familiar embrace, a ritual-filled rebuttal against the swift-running currents of time. As in *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, there's the inglorious thrall of the cape—the ill-fated act, however small (like catching a ride on a garbage truck), that you must keep young, but reminds you what it was like to be young. Made when he was only 31, Anderson's third feature is permeated

with the kind of nostalgic detail you'd associate with a man much older. Indeed, the period and place of *Tenenbaums*—like most of his other movies—are entirely imagined, not something he knew firsthand. You get the feeling Anderson identifies more with the regretful yet rascally old family patriarch (Gene Hackman) than with the film's younger characters (Ben Stiller, Gwyneth Paltrow, and Luke and Owen Wilson). I suppose you could call the picture a comedy of disappointment. Other titles on the schedule, running mostly on Saturdays through August 30, include *Rushmore*, *West Hot American Summer* (presented with Three Dollar Bill Cinema), *Ghostbusters*, *Jurassic Park*, and that perennial Fremont favorite, *The Big Lebowski*. Some screenings are 21-and-over events. **Fremont Outdoor Movies, 3501 Phinney Ave. N., 781-4230, fremontoutdoormovies.com. Free. Movie begins at dusk. BRIAN MILLER**

The Running of the Bulls

There's nothing inherently dangerous about a shopping cart, as opposed to a one-ton moving steer—or a whole herd of them, thundering through the narrow streets of Pamplona. But when you decorate your cart to resemble a bull, then chase it down Queen Anne Hill, racing alongside in your red-and-white outfit, anything can happen. This fifth-annual event coincides with the Queen Anne Days celebration (fun run, kiddie parade, carnival, etc.) doesn't actually descend the steepest part of Queen Anne Avenue North, since it nominally ends at Kerry Park. (Though, as in past years, a renegade gang of bull-chasers will probably continue on down to the Streamline tavern.) Drinking is integral to this lighthearted cattle drive: the start time is approximate; and all manner of frivolity can be expected while the herd assembles (or is assembled) at the starting line. When the last beer or Bloody Mary is consumed, that's when the clattering wheels will hit the pavement, and not a moment sooner. **The Poragon, 2125 Queen Anne Ave. N., 283-4548, paragonseattle.com. Free. 1 p.m. T. BOND**

**SUNDAY, JULY 13
Sounders v. Timbers**

Death day if you thought you were immune to soccer. But then everyone on Facebook started talking about Ghana and something called the "Group of Death"? You overheard scratches of arguments about London Donovan, whoever that is. By and by you realized there was some vague connection between Seattle and whatever's going on in Brazil—wasn't there some kid, DeAndre something, who did something amazing? And then, despite yourself, you started paying attention—maybe even watched part of the heartbreaker against Belgium—and now the World Cup aroused an itch you're not sure how to scratch. You're ripe for conversion, and today's match between Major League Soccer's two bitterest rivals should do it. Yes, the two Sounders on the U.S. men's team, Clint Dempsey and wunderkind O'Dea Hight graduate DeAndre Yedlin, will be back from Brazil, rested and ready to regain a team so far ahead in the standings that the second-place club (DC United and Real Salt Lake) seem like far-off specks on the horizon. Meanwhile the Portland Timbers, already at this point an extreme longshot for playoff contention, seem to have regressed to the helplessness of their 2012 season, leaving everyone wondering if this successful 2013 is a fluke. (Of course it was.) In other words, this ought to be a rout.

Passions run high higher than when the Timbers visit—nor does attendance: the second- and third-most-watched individual soccer matches in MLS history are our 2013 and 2012 meetings. **Century Link Field, 800 Occidental Ave. S., sounderscsc.com. \$35-\$305. 7 p.m. GAVIN BJORCHERT**

**TUESDAY, JULY 15
Ian Doescher**

The idea was simple: too good when this Portland author hatched it last year: a mashup of *Star Wars* and Shakespeare, light sabers meeting iambic pentameter, Wookies grunting in verse, R2-D2 given soliloquies in Elizabethan English rather than beeps and chirps. Doescher's first volume was the first movie (or fourth, in George Lucas' enumeration), *William Shakespeare's Star Wars*. Now follow the inevitable *William Shakespeare's The Empire Strikes Back* and *William Shakespeare's The Jedi Deth Return* (Quirk Books, \$14.95), both of which faithfully relate the movie's key scenes, though with an emphasis on speech over action. Thus when the gold-blinded Leia darts Jabba of the Hut on his floating Tatooine desert barge, she describes the strangling: "Whilst Jabba worries o'er the battle, I shall throw the chains about his neck. Then, pull!" Space combat is generally related by the characters, not the chorus. The giant sensor-dwelling worm, the Eworgers, even gets a soliloquy, lamenting that when his meal gets away



Doescher versifies all your favorite Lucas characters.

(i.e., those onboard the *Millennium Falcon*), "I shall with weeping crawl back into my cave, / Which shall, sans food, belike become my grave." Chewbacca sings (though, as usual, we have no idea that he's saying). Doescher also offers interjects paragraphs and wordplay alluding to Shakespeare (and even Sophocles), so Han Solo can diss his old friend with a casual aside, "This Lando doth protest too much, methinks."

Then there's the problem of Yoda's iconic diction. At first, his three-line stanzas didn't scan for me: five syllables, seven syllables, five syllables—with iambs and trochees running rampant, WTF? But he's like a Japanese seesei to Luke, so naturally he's speaking in iambic pentameter. I'll leave it to you to parse. If I were going to enter middle-school kids toward the Bard (and if the JJ Abrams *Star Wars* movies, with Episode VII due next Christmas 2015), this would be required reading; homework that is also hugely fun. (Also note that REACT Theater will present scenes from Doescher's trilogy at Elliott Bay Book Co., 6 p.m. Sun., July 20.) **Third Place Books, 17711 Bothell Way N.E., 366-3323, thirdplacebooks.com. Free. 7 p.m. (Also: Northgate Barnes & Noble, 2 p.m. Sun.) BRIAN MILLER**

GOOD BOOKSTORES

A Reader's Guide

Willis Earl Beal

» FROM PAGE 23

anti-capitalist message in *Nobody Knows*. So it's almost like if you purchased *Nobody Knows*, you could see this coming."

His label didn't see it coming, and Beal is leaving XL, choosing also to self-release his new *Experiments in Time* via the website CD Baby on August 8. Most of *Experiments* was conceived and recorded in New York, he says. Some tracks, however, he was inspired to write after reaching the Pacific Northwest.

So why did Beal move here? There are multiple reasons. Because our state's progressive bent reflects his own, Beal says. Transplanting here in January with his wife, who works as a nurse, was also the realization of a long-held dream to live in solitude, surrounded by trees. But perhaps more important, Beal says that living in New York City was stifling his creativity.

"I couldn't hear the music in New York," he says. "The lines are too rigid and distinct. I could see the people actually physically walking the lines. They dress the same. They all have that same voice that has proliferated to nearly everywhere in the United States. You can't see the lines here."

In returning to the DIY realm, of course, Beal gains full control of his work while losing access to the machinery and marketing the label provided. "It's not about XL," he says. "I put them through all types of hell trying to get [*Nobody Knows*] exactly how I wanted it. But don't make the mistake of believing that fame and fortune is going to give you something great. It will change your life in some aspects. Maybe you'll see some different countries and shit like that. But there is a price to be paid."

Beal sounds ready to accept the risks of being a truly indie, unsupported artist. Months after our initial encounter, I reach him by phone just as he's about to set off for a walk in the woods. I ask whether he'll tour behind *Experiments in Time*. "No," he replies. "I'm not nervous. You don't need a lot of money when your standard of living is as low as mine."

In that way, his path may have come full circle back to recording on primitive equipment and promoting the music by his lonesome. Only now he's not limited to leaving copies of albums with handwritten messages at coffee shops. Today Beal has a fan base that follows his work on Facebook and willisearlbeal.com. Beal says CD Baby will also help fund one of two videos he hopes will help stimulate sales (artists receive a healthy cut of the online music store's proceeds).

The new album, he says, "will be a minimalist symphony, full of lo-fi electronic sounds and stark imagery. It's going to be a reflection on my limitations as a musician. It has to do with me trying to figure out who the hell I am."

Five years into his career, the answer remains elusive. Beal's life has changed radically. He overcame obscurity in Chicago, burnt out on fame in New York, and now lives in Olympia, seclusion near a lake in suburban Olympia. Maybe it's the latter that way. To move forward, to find the answer to that question, maybe Beal had to go back. **X**

volcanman@seattleweekly.com

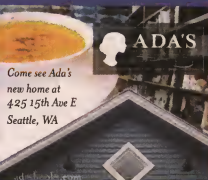
SPOTLIGHT ON Ada's Technical Books

How the Mind Works by Steven Pinker

Pinker explains culture and how it was born from our minds and our evolutionary need to interact with each other. He described the cycle of fashion, how it is important to be different than your peers, the cycle of high-culture going from jewels to minimalist to jewels again, always trying to be ahead of everyone else, appropriating stuff that is out of style.

Staff Picks at Ada's Technical Books

Moral Origins: The Evolution of Virtue, Altruism, and Shame by Christopher Boehm
The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood
The 4 Percent Universal: Dark Matter, Dark Energy, and the Race to Discover the Rest of Reality by Richard Panek
Onyx and Crake by Margaret Atwood
The Whence, the Why, and the How: 75 Artists Illustrate Wondrous Mysteries of Science by Matt Lamm, Julia Rothman, Janette Vokovick



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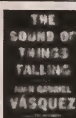


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SPOTLIGHT ON Third Place Books LFP

SOUND OF THINGS FALLING by Juan Gabriel Vasquez



This is a moving tale about the balance between choice and fate and how memory and the way we tell the tales of the past can influence how we live. Fans of Ian McEwan and Roberto Bolaño should devour this book.

Staff Picks at Third Place Books LFP

Infatuations by Javier Marías
Shining Girls by Lauren Beukes
Mrs. Poe by Lynn Cullen
The Wirehead by Jeremy Bushnell
The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry by Gabrielle Charbon

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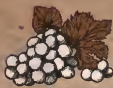


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**SATURDAY, JULY 12
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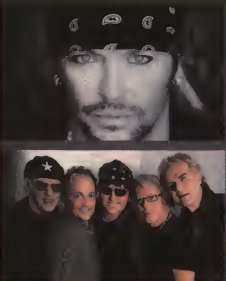
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arts & culture » Visual Arts

BY BRIAN MILLER

Openings & Events

- **BELTOWN ART WALK** Stop by venues including A/NT Gallery (with the group show *Mead (in) Motion*), Ruby's, and Seattle Glassblowing Studio. Info and walking map: beltownartwalk.com. Free. 6-8 p.m. Fri., July 11.
- **SABARA DE PIRRO & KATIE MILLER** They show separate sculpture and video works harnessed by the German notion of *Vorwurde*, translating as "the joyful anticipation of future pleasures." Method, 103 Third Ave. S. (Toshiko Kaplan Building), methodgallery.com. Opens Fri., July 11, noon-5 p.m. Through Aug. 23.
- **11 FEET ARTISTS** in the pop-up gallery event include Amanda Mantack, Shaun Kerding, Charlie Spitzack, Keith Tiford, Lavi Ferguson, Sean Barton, Jodi Dunkerley, Boyd Richard, Alexander Mostov, and Melissa Luden. The event includes live music by Py Moon Really, food, and a cash bar. The occasion is a newly created 11-foot mural by Mostov. **WoWork South Lake Union, 580 Yale Ave. N.** Free. 6-9 p.m. Through July 10.
- **GEORGETOWN ART ATTACK!** All the usual venues are open, with Tim Sibbald's posters at All City Coffee, Eleanor Davis and Esther Pearl Watson at Fanagraphics, and a group show called "The Dark Woods: The Roots of the Fairy Tale" at Kiro Job. Make sure to visit LoWAH Gallery, Equinox Studios, and Georgetown Arts and Cultural Center, too, before hitting the rain. **Overseas Georgetown, georgetownartattack.com**. Free. 6-9 p.m. Sat., July 12.
- **HEAVEN & EARTH** The Center on Contemporary Art (COCA) presents its annual outdoor art show, which will surely fall victim to vandals this summer, just like its predecessors. That means you should download the walking map and go early, before any destruction occurs. This year's theme is "At Above, So Below." Artists participating are Teresa Burman-Stern, Mary Cass, Sisa Berry-Fonseca, Joshua Harter, Michael Todd Harrison, Terrie Holcomb, Tom Hughes, Fred Lucas, Savina Mason, Loyi Mae Martin, Deanna Finkel, Kristin Schlimm, Suzanne Tallent, Megan Treasure, Ken Turner, and Alyce Wood. **Cerkes Park, 550 Carkeek Park Rd., cocaSeattle.org**. Free. Artist tour and opening reception: 2 p.m. Sat., July 12. Through Oct. 20.
- **PILCHUCK OPEN HOUSE** Drive on up to Stanwood for this annual summer party, which includes food, music, artist demos, and glass aplenty. **Pilchuck Glass School, 1201 31st St. N.W. (Stanwood), 521-8422, pilchuck.com**. \$20-\$35. Noon-5 p.m. Sun., July 13.
- **STEVE SCHNEIDER** The local music photographer shows photos of figure skater Eric Clapton, Tom Petty, and Marie Haggard. **The Triple Door, 216 Union St., 538-4333, theTripleDoor.net**. Free. Artist reception: 5-7 p.m. Fri., July 11. Through August 31.
- **CARTER SMITH** He offers new ribbon banners and garments. Also on view, prints by Renée Jameton. **Island Gallery, 400 Winslow Way E. (Bainbridge), 780-3600, theislandgallery.net**. Free. Opening reception: 6 p.m. Fri., July 11. Through Aug. 31.
- **RYAN WEATHERLY** He exhibits new paintings of distorted faces and figures. **Binfield Gallery, 1718 E. Olive Way, binfieldgallery.com**. Free. Opening reception: 6-9 p.m. Thurs., July 10. Through Aug. 5.

Ongoing

- **THE ART OF GAMAN** The subtitle of this group show reveals its start: point Arts & Crafts from the Japanese American Internment Camps, 1942-1946. Over 120 objects will be on view, many of them humble wood carvings, furniture, even toys made from scrap items at Minidoka or Manzanar. Some of the more touching items—like a samurai figurine made from wood scraps, shells, and bottle caps—come from family collections, not museums; they're precious keepsakes from a shameful historical era. **Bellevue Art Museum, 510 Bellevue Way N.E., 425-519-0770, bellevuearts.org**. \$8-\$10. Tues.-Sun., 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Through Oct. 12.
- **JOHN BUCK** Once a carousel of history comes to Pioneer Square in Buck's two wooden machines (plus woodblock prints and bas relief carvings). The central installations are *Borrowed Time* and *Dark Cradle*, both of them eronous, intricate meditations on colonialism and the golden age of discovery. This opening was the first of last week's First Thursday Art Walk. Bring the kids, but don't touch. **Gray Kacera Gallery, 212 Third Ave. S., 524-0770, greyskacera.com**. 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Tues.-Sat. Through Aug. 23.

Send events to visualarts@seattleweekly.com
See seattleweekly.com for full listings
• • Recommended

Drawn to Childhood

It's dark in back of the gallery, and at first you think **Scott Kolbo**, in his first solo show, is

THE FUSSYEYE simply displaying

BY BRIAN MILLER

ing dense pencil drawings mounted on glowing light boxes. Look more closely, and you detect movement *behind* the lines, like actors behind a stage scrim, creating depth to his tableaux. Watch a while, and you detect the source videos—downloaded, digitally altered, animation added—on a flat video screen. (Three larger works are also projected on the walls for *Our Alley*, accompanied by a few drawn character studies.) At the opening, Kolbo told me his alley scenes of children running wild "were all inspired by the alley behind my own house in Spokane," where he grew up. Recently transplanted to Seattle, teaching at SPU, he recruited his own kids and their pals to play games in the alley. "I asked them, 'If there were no adults around, what would you do?' They made up their own characters, and I recorded it—and offered some suggestions. It was like herding

cats." With various props and one slightly menacing adult (dubbed "The Twinker"), the scenes lasted 30 seconds to a few minutes. Then, over the next few years, Kolbo gradually traced over the videos, creating a busy lattice of pencil outlines and gestures into which the videotaped characters settle. "I just pause and capture movements that I think are poignant," he says. Each time the video slows or halts, you see a new composition in the same frame. The kids shift from innocent to threatening postures, then the mood lightens again—as if a parental voice is calling them inside for milk and cookies.

Gallery4Culture, 101 Pratt Avenue Place S.

(Toshiko Kaplan Building) 46-7580, Culture.org. Free. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Ends July 31.

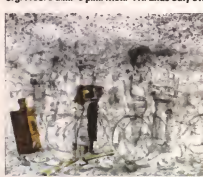


PHOTO: JAMES HAY

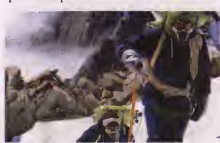
Opening This Week

Beyond the Edge

OPENS FRI., JULY 11 AT SUNDANCE CINEMAS.
NOT RATED. 90 MINUTES.

The bigger the camera, the bigger your subject should be. One reason *Titanic* worked so well, back in '97, was James Cameron's decision to film the shipwreck in widescreen. He also had an array of digital tools, plus a nation full of huge multiples screens and stadium seating—none of which *A Night to Remember*, shot 40 years before on smaller aspect ratio, had enjoyed. And only two years ago, Cameron reissued his film in 3-D IMAX format. Size sells.

Mount Everest represents the same massive attraction to filmmakers: There was the IMAX *Everest* doc in '98, with local climber Ed Viesturs among those on the ascent; and four years ago the doomed *English Expedition of 1924* also went the IMAX route in *The Wildest of Men*. So what's left to film? The first successful Everest expedition, which placed Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay on the summit in 1953. As with *Titanic*, this is hardly an obscure historical episode: The English effort was well photographed and documented in newscasts, and New Zealand filmmakers Matthew Metzcalfe and Lesnie Polley make good use of those source materials here. But this can't just be a grainy black-and-white archival job for the History Channel, so they've gone the 3-D route for the new footage and, grain, reenactment scenes—always a questionable practice.



Nonspeaking actors portray Norgay and Hillary.

Beyond the Edge is mainly intended as a tribute to the tall, modest former beeper who was Hillary; and it succeeds that far. But we mustn't ignore the plucky, determined Norgay, so he's valorized, too. Everyone's brave, everyone's admirable, and everything ends well for the expedition. Again, it's hard to spin much drama out of such a renowned, successful endeavor. Experts and even Mallory's son hint at his class anxieties, but this just seems a cheap overlay of modern neurosis, an unsurpassable gimmick. Is there something so wrong about having a psychologically normal and well-adjusted hero?

To its credit, the 3-D aspect ratio of *Everest* looks great in *Beyond the Edge*, though most of it was actually shot near Mt. Cook in the Southern Alps of New Zealand. (Like the *LOTR* movies, this is a postcard-perfect invitation to visit that country.) This familiar story isn't entirely dull, and local alpinists will chuckle at some of the historical details: the expedition leader John Hunt pocking away on a typewriter in his tent, high up at base camp. And today we complain there's too much technology on the mountain. BRIAN MILLER

Olanna (Newton) and Odenigbo (Ejorfor) interrupted on their wedding day.



Half of a Yellow Sun

OPENS FRI., JULY 11 AT SUNDANCE.
RATED R. 118 MINUTES.

The problems of squishing down a novel to fit a two-hour movie are familiar; when a complicated historical setting is added to the mix, things really get thorny. *Half of a Yellow Sun* tackles a decade or so in Nigeria's tortured chronology, from its early years of independence to the disastrous Biafran war that divided the country in 1967-1970. The pattern is set from Chinamanda Nwogu-Aduchie's prize-winning 2006 novel, and pattern is about all you can discern in the film's dutiful but sketchy treatment.

The early scenes in post-colonial Nigeria are vivid and saucy. We meet two sisters, Olanna (Thandie Newton) and Kainene (*Dreamgirls* dynamo Anika Noni Rose), who've been raised in wealth and educated abroad. Kainene—who disappears from the film for far too long—gets involved with a white British writer (Joseph Mawle), while Olanna travels across the country to join her fellow professor and lover, Odenigbo (Chiwetel Ejorfor). He's a political activist, although for a while the movie's look at tribal loyalties and new political movements is back-burnered in favor of more personal intimacy: sexual betrayal, payback, an out-of-wedlock baby.

When we do get to the establishment of the short-lived Republic of Biafra, director Biyi Bandele creates a handful of disturbing scenes, especially a massacre at an airport that is all the more chilling for being so calmly filmed. There's something powerful about the juxtaposition of images, as the movie travels from bright, stylish academics debating philosophy to soldiers carrying bloodied machetes down the middle of the street. (Those disparate images still haunt Nigeria, as the grotesque jihad of Boko Haram has proved.) The main problem with *Yellow Sun* is that—despite the power of Newton and Rose, who rather overshadow 12 *Year a Slave* star Ejorfor here—the characters are forced to stand around and deliver exposition on a too-regular basis. And even with all that summarized history (also augmented by newscast footage and a narrator), the reasons for the sectarian violence and the civil war itself will remain incomplete for non-

specialists in African history. At the end there's the suggestion that we've been watching the stories of real people, although the source is a fictional work.

That final note—seemingly added to tie up some tragic loose ends—only adds to the sense of confusion. ROBERT HORTON

The Internet's Own Boy

OPENS FRI., JULY 11 THURS., JULY 17 AT
NORTHWEST FILM FORUM.
NOT RATED. 104 MINUTES.



Swartz before his untimely death.

This documentary about the short life of Internet activist Aaron Swartz (1986-2013) begins and ends with heartbreaking home movies of the child prodigy in Chicago. Director Brian Knappenberger got full access to the Swartz family, and their candor about Aaron—hounded to suicide by draconian federal prosecutors—is no less moving. But, in a sense, rare are the easy part here. We see a bright, idealistic teen programmer treated as a peer by the adults with whom he helped develop RSS; he later co-founders and sells Reddit, then transitions to political causes. Here is a gifted young man, his life cruelly cut short.

What's harder to convey—what Knappenberger does with many screen graphics and expert interviews—is the complicated, contested notion of what the Internet should freely divulge, keep secret, or license and hold behind paywalls. I confess, as a journalist whose brain is constantly connected by keyboard to the Web, that Swartz's important activities and untimely death didn't first register as they should've. The federal charges, brought in 2011, seemed impossibly dull: downloading academic journals, gigabytes IP addresses, proxy servers, and endless lines of code. Always with the coding, some of which we see onscreen. Coding, coding, coding.

Yet that was Swartz's great love: coding as a kind of magic; coding that, if used altruistically, could provide public access to restricted yet publicly funded research (and court documents, and government laws and records); coding that could promote democracy and disseminate knowledge. And Swartz has plenty of high-powered friends and mentors who testify here about that civic good: Lawrence Lessig, Tim Berners-Lee, Cory Doctorow, etc. And more, Knappenberger includes Julian Assange, Edward Snowden, and Bradley Chalkas Manning; they, with Swartz, become modern-day martyrs of the digital age.

"Sharing is not immoral," Swartz declared in a cyber-manifesto (with other authors), which warned against the privatization of public knowledge. The feds, in a post-9/11 context, interpreted this as a pirate's intent to steal and attack protected networks. Over and over, Swartz's defenders decry the government's attempt to "make an example" of this gentle young download freak.

Yet Knappenberger shies away, perhaps as Swartz did, from the larger implications of everything-for-free sharing culture. All those databases he siphoned, as others do today were edited, compiled, and indexed by someone—perhaps by some bright, penniless grad student like Swartz, only without the Reddit windfall, who needed the job. Though the feds wouldn't speak to Knappenberger, he ought to have solicited more opinions outside Swartz's circle of friends.

Knappenberger, who previously profiled the group Anonymous in *We Are Legion: The Story of the Hacktivists*, also dismisses the news accounts that Swartz's depressive tendencies predated his arrest and prosecution. Still, this sympathetic if one-sided doc leaves the feeling that if you use the Internet and unquestioningly accept its terms and conditions, Swartz died for your sins. BRIAN MILLER

Razing the Bar

OPENS FRI., JULY 11 THURS., JULY 17 AT
GRAND ILLUSION. NOT RATED. 80 MINUTES.

Local director Ryan Worsley's worthwhile documentary chronicles the people, culture, and eventual demise of the legendary punk venue The Funhouse, which operated near Seattle Center



A typically raucous scene at the old bar.

from 2003-12. When he heard it was shutting down, Worsley—a Funhouse patron—began gathering interviews with Funhouse staff, bartenders, clubgoers, and bands. Incorporating old photos and concert footage, plus a rocking soundtrack (including local music from The Pharmacy and the Lights), *Razing the Bar* is a poignant commentary on the power of music and the reality of closure.

We hear about various bands—including one whose guitar player "pied in a cup, put it in his mouth, and then spit it on the audience"—

and learn about the rise of Joetta Velasquez, a former homeless runaway who booked talent for Funhouse co-owner Brian Foss; today she's a senior producer at *Austin City Limits*.

Foss, host of *Sonic Reducer* Saturdays on KEXP and longtime Seattle talent booker, figures prominently in the film. His candid observations about the venue reflect how his golden-rule business ethic kept The Funhouse—a crusty old place of a venue—together for nine years.

The doc relates the bar's history as a gritty arts incubator, exploring not only the artist community that revolved around the club, but also gentrification, always a charged topic in booming Seattle. Many local musicians share their memories, from Kurt Bloch (Fastbacks, Young Fresh Fellows) to indie rockers Rachel Ratner (Wimps) and Anthony Fantozzi (Poop Attack, Rats in the Grass). *Razing the Bar's* energy—and that of the many fans, punks, and musicians who frequented The Funhouse—gives it a certain kinship to the 1996 grunge doc *Gheddy*, which Worsley cites as a strong influence. GWENDOLYN ELLIOTT

Third Person

OPENS FRI., JULY 11 AT SUNDANCE.
RATED R, 137 MINUTES.



Wildie as flighty writer.

Paul Haggis has had such a curious career, it's no wonder he seems to make movies with no regard for fashion or demographics. The Canadian-born filmmaker rebranded for years as a TV writer/producer before scripting two successive Best Picture Oscar winners, *Million Dollar Baby* and *Crash* (he also directed the latter). He then co-wrote a couple of James Bond pictures and the somber Iraq War movie *In the Valley of Elah*, and caused a rumpus in 2011 by loudly resigning his longtime membership in Scientology.

Somewhere with a resume like this—did we mention he also created *Wilder, Texas Rangers*?—likely has little left to prove. That might explain the untheatrical quality of *Third Person*, which Haggis wrote and directed. On first glance, the film appears to follow the *Crash* course of interlocking stories, but closer inspection suggests something much older going on. We can't reveal too much on that score, but at the center of the movie is a novelist (Liam Neeson) hard at work on a new manuscript. He's holed up in a Paris hotel after a traumatic incident, his mis-

tres (Olivia Wilde) in a nearby room and his wife (Kim Basinger) back home in the States. We also watch a tale set in Rome, where a shady businessman (Adrien Brody) gets ensnared in a human-trafficking scenario involving a single mother (the impressive Moran Atias). And there's a Manhattan story, in which a hapless hotel maid (Mila Kunis) fights for shared custody of her son with an angry ex (James Franco, listless).

The latter story is by far the weakest; it feels necessary only to triangulate the main theme. The Rome tale has some authentic intrigue, and it's good to see Brody (something of a wanderer since his Oscar for 2002's *The Pianist*) given a shot to play to his strengths: His character is smart, self-righteous, a little oily. (As in Haggis' other films as director, the acting is variable from performer to performer.)

There's some refreshingly grown-up play between Neeson and Wilde, who put flirtatious pranks on each other as he tries to dodge her questions about his own writing. The story threads take too long to gather, and the concept behind their co-existence is both enigmatic and a little thin for everything we've just sat through (it would make a decent short story, though). Haggis earns churchpat points, at least, for bucking,

Hollywood's shameless pandering to the youth market: He betrays no hint of gearing *Third Person* toward any audience other than himself. ROBERT HORTON

Verus in Fur

OPENS FRI., JULY 11 AT VARSITY.
NOT RATED, 96 MINUTES.

In this adaptation of the 2010 stage play by David Ives, Roman Polanski casts his wife in the main role and makes his leading man look as much like himself as possible. As tempting as it is to read autobiographical intention into these decisions, I think it's probably wise to take them as sardonic jokes. It's much better to simply watch the French-language *Verus in Fur* as an extended and often hilarious riff on power plays and erotic gamesmanship, both of which are offered here in ripe-flowering abundance. *Verus in Fur* features just two people on a single set. The conceit is that a stage director,

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



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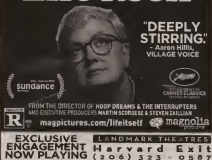
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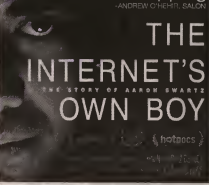
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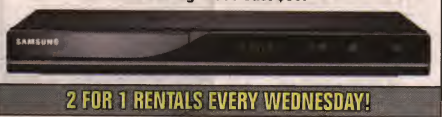
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» FROM PAGE 31



REHEARSAL SCENE FROM LES DESTINÉES

Rehearsal turns to role-play: Seigner and Amalric.

Thomas (Mathieu Amalric), is caught at the end of a day of auditions by an obnoxious, gim-cracking actress, Vanda (Emmanuelle Seigner). He's casting the lead in an adaptation of the notorious 19th-century novel *Venus in Furs*, by Leopold von Sacher-Masoch—you know, the guy who put the Masoch into masochism. By overpowering this diminutive director and flaunting her physique, Vanda convinces Thomas to read with her, in an encounter that increasingly muddles the lines between the written material and their own rehearsal process. (The English-speaking movie viewer has an advantage over a theatergoer: The English subtitles are italicized whenever the characters slip into Sacher-Masoch, so things aren't quite as muddy as they might be.) We watch this push-me/pull-you dance as it moves around the theater, morphing into something very close to a full-on horror movie by the end. Polanski is a master of limited spaces (recall Catherine Deneuve and Mia Farrow in their respective apartments in *Repulsion* and *Rosemary's Baby*), so making this two-hander come to sinuous life is no problem. He's also spent a career observing the ways people tear each other apart, usually by tiny degrees, so the arm-wrestling here is precisely managed.

What's especially bracing about the movie is how funny it is—even *Amalric*. Desplat's entrance and exit music is amusingly bombastic. The humor comes from the movie's worldly attitude and the performances. Having previously appeared with Seigner in *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, Amalric is doing a desperation and bluster, and he always appears susceptible to sexual temptation. Seigner, who married Polanski in 1989 and has maintained a busy career of her own, is utterly unleashed and outrageous. Someone will undoubtedly suggest that Vanda is a misogynistic projection, but the male creators here—screenplay, playwright, film director—are instead conspiring to depict how feebly men understand women. Seigner is absolutely in on that plot. ROBERT HORTON

Violette

OPENS FRI., JULY 11 AT HARVARD EXIT.
NOT RATED. 138 MINUTES.

Forgotten writers seldom return to favor: There's Melville and ... that's about it. Rarely read today, French writer *Violette* (1907-1972) hit her peak of renown a half-century ago. Until the late success of her raw, unfiltered memoirs (beginning with *La Bâtarde*), she was best known—if at all beyond Proustian literary circles—as the protégée of Simone de Beauvoir, with whom Leduc was unhappy in love. Leduc's scandalous depiction of

Isabian amour, during the '40s and '50s, frightened her editors. Cuts were made and sales were few. Then came the sexual revolution of the '60s—sweet vindication at last.

Because Leduc's struggle was so long, the task is not an easy one for director Martin Provost in this admiring biopic. There's a lot of life material to pack in here, setback after setback, in a picture spanning almost 30 years. His approach is comprehensive and linear, too much so. This happened—and then this happened and then this happened—fine for a war movie; not so great when watching Leduc (Emmanuelle Devos) sit down to write ... again and again and again. (Thank God the movie has a happy ending, a spoiler that I, as a fellow writer, happily disclose: Leduc ends up bet-



SAINT-GERMAIN FILMS

The ever-avid Leduc (Devos, left) stalks de Beauvoir (Kibralain).

ter than most of us poor deadline hacks—with a perfect Provence farm house to boot.)

You can't fault Devos' fierce, committed performance as an insecure author who forever rates herself an ugly duckling, provincial and untalented. We meet Leduc during a sham marriage during the war. She supports her guy husband as an industrious black marketer—then, catastrophe, the war ends. Suddenly deprived of a vocation, she pours her soul into a manuscript and plops it into the startled lap of de Beauvoir (Sandrine Kibralain), whose slightly aloof pose is rattled by her pupyl's sheer neediness—Sartre never behaves this way!

Oh, yeah, that's another problem with Provost's approach: the historical footnoting and encyclopedic name-dropping. *Violette* is thick with the musk of Sartre, Camus, and Jean Genet (only the latter is depicted), plus Leduc's various patrons and detractors, none of whom we care about. It may be accurate, but it's way too much. This is the kind of movie where the ever-avid yet frustrated Leduc asks de Beauvoir why she's so busy all the time. *Oh, it's just a little book I'm working on, but I can't decide on a title ...* "The Second Gender?" "The Second Person?" Something like that ...

Half of good writing (i.e., art) is editing, the pruning of what you don't need to say after you've committed it to paper. Cuts must be made. Leduc's editors—de Beauvoir included—keep telling her. Indeed. BRIAN MILLER

film@seattleweekly.com

BY BRIAN MILLER

Local & Repertory

CZECH THAT FILM FESTIVAL Six recent titles are screened in this weekend mini-fest. See seattleweekly.com for schedule and details. (NR) SIFF Film Center (Seattle Center), 324-9956, siff.net, Fri-Sat, 11 p.m. Fri-Sun.

FOR LAUGHING OUT LOUD The six-film series of American screen comedies begins with 1935's *Hand Across the Table*. Here, Carole Lombard (who played Bette Bellamy [who's rich] and Fred MacMurray [who's poor]). We're betting on MacMurray. (NR) Seattle Art Museum, 1300 First Ave., 654-7121, seattlemuseum.org, 80 individual, \$45-\$65 series, 7:30 p.m. Thurs. End, Aug. 14.

THE MIGHTY ANDERSONS On Weds., July 5, we have the impeccably fine *Ton Crute* in Paul Thomas Anderson's 1992 *Magnolia*. Next week we see Anderson's instantly loved 2004 maritime adventure *The Life Aquatic With Steve Zissou* (Tues.). In *PTA's* 2007 *Punch-Drunk Love* (Wed.), the last time Adam Sandler has been remotely bearable onscreen. (R) SIFF Film Center, 561-71 p.m. Tues. & Weds.

MOVIES AT MAGNUSON PARK This popular series begins with *Grease*. Gates open at 7 p.m. Movie at dusk, 1976's most popular film centered John Travolta's movie superstardom. And give movie Newton-John her only taste of A, and, make no mistake, *Grease*—despite the fact that everyone in the cast is obviously out of place by running the PTA—still looks like the stuff of which legends are made. When the 1.5-hour first tells our "Hey, Zuko!" and the camera zooms in to capture Travolta's magnificent mug, you know you're in the presence of a god. *Zac Street* As A (PG-13) STEVE WICKING *Magnuson Park, 7400 Sand Point Way NE, 20 years old, magnificent*, \$5. 3 p.m.

POPE IN FACTION Yes, Pope Fiction is 20 years old. How many motherfucking candles does it deserve on its motherfucking cake? As many motherfucking candles as Jules Winnfield wants, that's how many. So this is the movie's influence, that, also owing to the prior *Reservoir Dogs*, a whole generation of moviegoers has been raised in what we now call the Post-Tarantino Era. I won't bore you with the long list of Quentin Tarantino wannabes; the truth is that he's cultivated most of them, valiantly himself in Hollywood with more unlikely hits (e.g., *Inglourious Basterds*), attracted big stars with his writing, and finally earned a whole Oscar—not just a half—for scripting *Uncharted* (which also did a whole lot more business than anyone expected). But this is the movie that brought Tarantino to the mainstream, with its wonderfully elliptical plotting and abrupt reversals and tangents, plus that all-star cast. (If you need reminding: John Travolta, Uma Thurman, Tim Roth, Bruce Willis, Christopher Walken, Amanda Plummer, and Harvey Keitel deliver line after quotable line. Let's not speak of *Marty* [Burt Reynolds] in *B.R.M. Central Cinema*, 1411 21st Ave., 686-6846, central-cinema.com, \$8-28 9:30 p.m. Fri-Sat.

RICK-ROCK THE STORY OF RICKY FRO 1991, this superlative prison drama from Hong Kong, here dubbed *Rocky*, has achieved cult status for its gags. (NR) Grand Illusion, 1403 NE 50th St., 523-3395, grandillusioncinema.com, \$5-57 9 p.m. Fri. & Sat.

ROMAN HOLIDAY Audrey Hepburn stars in this 1953 romance, for which she earned an Oscar playing a princess who dumps her station to covert with a reporter (Gregory Peck). The of them bonding around on his scooter through Italian streets has become an icon of love, and of Rome, although William Wyler's movie doesn't stray among her best work or his. It's more a charmer than a classic, and the source story by blacklisted writer Dalton Trumbo seems to lack a 100-year timelessness. Peck hardly makes for a humanitarian journalist, though Eddie Albert scores laurels as a proto-beatnik. Mainly it's a chance to see Hepburn's radiant effect, she's a princess playing a princess. (NR) B.R.M. Central Cinema, 56-58 7 p.m. Fri-Tues., plus 3 p.m. Sat. & Sun.

UNDER THE SKIN Yes, this is the movie where Scarlett Johansson gets naked—and playing an alien buttress cloaked in human skin—lures men to their deaths. Aided by the most around Scotland in a white van, a calling out to a single man with a pinkish accent, then leading him back to his glass-fronted abode. In the end, *Under the Skin*, director Jonathan Glazer (Sawy Bees, *Burnt*) dispenses with suspense or context, instead we have process, sometimes odd. Eventually Johansson's visitor goes roger-roger.

enly having been inspired to empathy—or maybe just bloodless curiosity—after picking up a disguised hitchhiker. Under the Skin then becomes a diatribe about movie. The movie risks failing to ask an unsettling question about this predator: If this she can question her role, consider her apathetic from the how, might she still have a soul? (R) BRIAN MILLER SIFF Film Center, 56-511, 8:30 p.m. Mon.

THE UNKNOWN KNOWN Having won an Oscar for his 2003 *The Fog of War*, a study of Vietnam War architect Robert McNamara, documentary giant Eric Morris now turns to another controversial U.S. Secretary of Defense for a bookend project. The subject here is Donald Rumsfeld, who held the job during the commencement of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. Rumsfeld is often tarred in his egoisms and his naivete. The big of war? There isn't even a faint mist in Rumsfeld's mind. Where McNamara was troubled by the decision he'd made during Vietnam, Rumsfeld does not appear to have practiced introspection, or even heart of it. Nothing happens to break the surface, and Rumsfeld's unforgivingly cheerful bureaucracy is unappealing. Morris allows us to decide how to view this singularly unreflexive person. (PG-13) ROBERT HORTON SIFF Film Center, 56-511, 8 p.m. Mon.

20,000 DAYS ON EARTH This new film by Ian Forsyth and Jane Pollard makes Nick Cave, who performed at the Paramount last week, its subject. The film is not a documentary portrait, but more kind of a dreamy, life-filled series of vignettes, with Cave very much an equal partner on the project. He and Warren Ellis provide the score. (NR) Grand Illusion, \$5-57 7 p.m. Thurs.

Ongoing

BEGIN AGAIN As with his 2007 hit *Once*, writer-director John Carney again presents such an optimistic and joyful story of New Yorkers, upper-middle-class and original scene—this time framed in Manhattan instead of Dublin. Kara Kingley gets a faithful girlfriend to up-and-coming rock star (she's Adam Levine) and an aspiring singer herself. After *Rock* scores a record deal, the pair moves to Manhattan, where he's quickly seduced by the industry's temptations. When Greta turns to fellow busker Steve (James Conrad), he whisks her out to an open-mike night in the Village, where she's shocked to discover he's down-on-his-kel record exec Den (Mark Ruffalo). Obviously we expect these two to connect, just as in *Once*. That film worked for me (and many others) because I could buy the central couple played by Greg Kinnear and Marketa Irglová (both of them real musicians). Began Again has more like supporting purchased in a solo boutique. (R) GENDVONDU ELLIOTT Galt 48c, Big Picture, *Cinebars*, others.

LIFE AFTER For the last 25 years of his life, Roger Ebert was the most famous film critic in America. In his final decade—the died in April 2013—Ebert became a hero for someone else. He faced death in public way, with frankness and grit. This new documentary about Ebert focuses perhaps too much on the cancer fight. This is understandable: director Steve James—whose *How Green Was My Valley* irreverently championed—had touching access to the critic and his wife Chaz during what turned out to be Ebert's last weeks. It's a blunt, stirring portrait of illness. The movie is not Ebert's. Ebert's own writing sometimes fills the screen, along with clips of a few of his favorite bits, yet isn't sufficient to explore Ebert's entire devotion, which was authentic. Still, this is a fine film that admirably asks as many questions as it answers. (NR) R.R. Harvard Eats

SNOWPIECER Let me state that I have no factual basis for believing that a train would be able to stay in continuous motion across a globe-grinding circuit track for almost two decades (and that's the people on board could sustain themselves and their brutal case system under such circumstances. But for 124 minutes of loco-movie, I had no problem buying it. That's because director Bong Joon-ho, making his first English-language film, has gone whole hog in imagining the world's last continental overland. The plot has fairly bold—Captain America's Chris Evans and Jamie Bell play their leaders—and stalk their way toward the globe's inventor of the supercontinent. It's a well-acted and the way up in the train. Each train car is a wacky surprise, fully designed and witty detailed. With John Hurt, Tilda Swinton, and Song Kang-ho in the lead. (R) R.R. SIFF Cinema Uptown, Ark Lodge, *Kirkland Parkette*

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Smoking Weed With WEED

Members of Seattle's finest local strain talk about what it means to make stoner rock.

BY KELTON SEARS

John Goodhue
and Gabriel Seaver
of WEED light up.

In recognition of Washington state marijuana retailers officially opening for business this week, we set down with Bainbridge Island's WEED, took a few tokes, and chatted about the origins and nature of its particular strain of stoner rock.

Falling Into the Earth is both a 14-minute song from WEED's excellent new LP, *Fong Shui Capital of the World*, as well as the band's guiding mantra on what it means to be a true stoner rocker. Like most divine prophecies, the revelation to write it was delivered from on high via YouTube. Bassist Gabriel Seaver was streaming the stoner-rock classic *Dopetone* by Electric Wizard when he stumbled upon the phrase. "One of the comments on the video said 'I feel like I'm falling into the earth right now,' and that was really impactful for me on what this music means," Seaver remembers. "Stoner rock has a very grounding sensation."

That is essential to WEED's notion of its chosen genre: a rootiness in place. Certainly the crushing weight of heavy, repetitive riffs can assume a listener to a landscape, be it the vast, cushiony terrain of the couch or the alien desert on the cover of Sleep's *Dopetone*. For the three members of WEED—Seaver, drummer John Goodhue, and guitarist Mike Fossaghi—that landscape is their home, Bainbridge Island, where the band formed as high-school juniors six years ago.

"I just feel very identified with Bainbridge,"

Seaver explains. "I feel very dedicated to the place, the community there, and the land there. I have such a connection with it."

That identity is part of the reason the band didn't completely change its name this year when it began venturing into Seattle to play shows, only to find another regional band named Weed (lo-fi grunge punks from Vancouver, B.C.) had already staked a claim in the scene. After increasing public confusion over which strain of Weed was actually playing, the group just threw another E into its name and called it good.

"I think our name is important to us because that's who we are. It's that rooted feeling," Goodhue says. "We grew up with it—that's us."

Traditional African and East Indian music has informed another aspect of WEED's stoner-rock ethos: spirituality, which frequently intertwines with place in all kinds of music, for instance that of Mallam desert group (and WEED favorite) Tinariwen.

"One of my favorite musicians who is also a spiritual guide for me is Mahmoud Guinia," says Seaver. "He's a Gnawa musician from Morocco and carries on the whole tradition of a mystical sect of Islam. I think the main way I want to be influenced is spiritually with music. That's what really attracts me."

"Morning Prayer," the sun-baked first track on *Fong Shui*, ripples with gum-rumbling Middle Eastern guitar lines and wordless chanting. Its heady chugging recalls the reverent,

transcendent air of Guinea's polyrhythmic, riff-based liturgies, even though they were written halfway around the world, far from the band's inspirational fountainhead.

Goodhue reiterates the idea of "falling into the earth." "It's just grounding. It can be spiritual in any capacity—it doesn't necessarily have to be, it's just whatever makes you feel good."

Seaver chimes in. "Heaviness certainly plays into it, but stoner rock is about good vibes." For WEED, sonic, terrestrial, and spiritual heaviness combine to create the effect of "falling into the earth," which should ultimately generate those elusive good vibes. *Fong Shui*, recorded at Woodinville's famous Bear Creek studios, is certainly a triumph—mostly because it manages to break free of the stoner rock's archetypal "Sweet Leaf," Sabbath-era origins. While Tony Iommi's famous post-toke cough certainly launched a thousand heavy ships into the emerald sea of the genre, for WEED it's about more than just herb worship.

"I guess there is [that] genre of stoner rock," Seaver muses. "But I think that [any] good music could be stoner music." ☐

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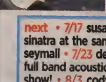
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The Week Ahead

Wednesday, July 9

It has been nearly four years since they last took the stage, but **THE DUTCHES** and **THE DUKE**, the once-beloved Seattle-based folk duo, is back together and playing a show! No double take necessary—it's a real thing. The split happened quite suddenly back in 2010 when Jesse Lorts and Kimberly Morrison announced via Facebook their last show would be at the Tractor. While music insiders sensed turmoil, the news was quite a shock for fans of the band on the outside. For years afterward, a song from one of their two releases—2008's *She's The Dutches*, *He's The Duke* or 2009's *Sunrise*—could be heard randomly on KEXP, often inducing sharp pangs of grief for certain listeners. This show announcement is another shock to the system, an out-of-the-blue "Oh yeah, we're playing again," but one that gets your heart racing and your feet jumping to dance. It's encouraging to see a great band take a break from something that wasn't working and come back for another go. Like anything in life, distance gives perspective, so here's hoping this go-round adds new fuel to the fire and signals a new beginning. With La Supra, Chop Suiy (Dragon Lounge), 125 E. Madison St., 320-8005, chopuiy.com, 8 p.m. \$10. **MORGEN SCHULER** There's an understated elegance to Familiars, the fifth album from Brooklyn indie-rock trio **THE ANTLERS**, which makes it both unassuming and breathtaking. The mid-temp instrumentation, including a wistful trumpet and twinkling keys from multi-instrumentalist Darby Cicci, shifts between cinematic and somber, and Peter Silbermann's emotionally charged vocals and lyrics on the theme of identity add to the moody atmosphere. With Yellow Derricks, Neumos, 925 E. Pike St., 704-9442, neumos.com, 8 p.m. \$18 live. All ages. **AZARIA C. POPPICKS**

JURASSIC embodies the glory days of rap: a six-piece crew teaming with unique personalities, crafting artful music with a conscious message. Since reuniting at Coccolla last year, they've released a single, "The Way We Do It" (introduced by the late Heavy D), and have lined up more to come. With Dilated Peoples, Beat Junkies (Melo D), MC Supanatural. The Showbox, 1428 First Ave., showboxpresents.com, 8 p.m. \$29.50 adv./\$45 DOS. **MICHAEL F. BERRY**

Thursday, July 10

Former Seattleite **SARA GAZAREK** has been making a name for herself as a jazz vocalist for nearly a

decade, and her most recent effort, 2012's *Blossom & Bee*, demonstrates her weathering on standards or mesmerizing with her own original material, her honey-rich vocals are to die for. Through Sunday, Jay-Alley, 2033 Sixth Ave., 441-8726, jayalley.com, 7:30 p.m., plus 9:30 p.m. Fri. & Sat. \$24.50. All ages. **BRIAN PALMER**

Saturday, July 12

With more than 100 folk, nonprofit, and arts & crafts vendors, there is going to be more than enough excitement at the **BALLARD SEAFOOD FEST**. Toss in a couple dozen bands, and you have one hell of a party. The MainStage will feature some of the Northwest's best folk rock (Salle Ford), bluesgrass (Fruition), and bucceroni indie rock (Ravena Woods), plus one of the most engaging up-and-coming alt-folk bands in the area (Vaudiville Eclectique), among others. The SideStage will showcase Ballard's Scandinavian heritage with dance from clowns to musical games. Through Sunday. With Goodbye Heart, The Flair Blue, You Me & Apollo, Polythemics, Eldridge Gravy and The Court Rodeo, Downtown Ballard, 784-9705, seafoodfest.org. Music starts 1 p.m. Sat., noon Sun. Free. All ages. **OP** Upon their arrival in the late aughts, **THE FREED & ONLYS** were just another band mining garage rock's lineage for something new. Initial offerings didn't stand on the genre, just added some California pop to the mix. But singer Tim Cohen dug in for his solo albums, bringing back a singular perspective for the band's latest, *House of Spirits*, making the disc a gradually developing work—in contrast to much of garage rock's frantic chiselmanship. Chop Suiy, 9 p.m. \$10 adv./\$16 DOS. 21 and up. **DAVE CANTOR** **BILL EVANS** is as much a scholar as a performer of the bang, readily capable of rendering styles from the instrument's African roots through the present. It's his facility with the instrument, though, that makes him an indispensable advocate of the bang as both a music-historical and a living artifact. Expect almost as much explanation as jamming. Empty Sea Studios, 6300 Piney Ave. N., 226-4453, emptyseastudios.com, 8 p.m. \$12 adv./\$15 DOS. **DC** Seattle label *Lig'it* in the attic, which reintroduced the world to Soto Rodriguez before Searching for Sugar Man won the Oscar (and our hearts), is hosting its first annual **LIGHT IN THE ATTIC SUMMER SPECTACULAR** at its Ballard warehouse. The

>> CONTINUED ON PAGE 38



Wye Oak

Where's Darko?

A city-hopping rapper returns to Seattle.

BY MICHAEL F. BERRY



COURTESY OF AVATAR DARKO

After recent trips to New York, London, and Los Angeles, catching the Superbowl and working on his new album, *Soviet Gonion 3*, Russian-born rapper Avatar Darko is back in Seattle and met with us for a chat.

SW You recently tweeted that London inspired you to write three songs. How?

Darko: It kind of reminds me of Seattle in a way, like a European Seattle, just because the weather is like, super-bipolar.

What's the best thing about Los Angeles?
I like being by the beach, by the water.

New York?

There's a neighborhood in New York called Brighton Beach, where the majority of people there are Russian, so it feels like I'm back in Russia—a home away from home.

Seattle?

It's home and there's nothing like home.

What's your take on the Russia/Ukraine/

Crimes situation?

Funny you ask. While I was in London, I actually wrote a song ("Half Lit World") about that for the new album, and basically I answer that question real well. I'm conflicted; it's kind of a sensitive subject, because my family is in eastern Ukraine and they're dealing with the consequences out there, and it's hard for them—it hits home.

What's new about Soviet Gonion 3?

The beginning of the album starts off kind of aggressive—like what most people think of when they hear my name—and then it kind of veers off into a more introspective side with songs such as "Half Lit World," where I'm telling a story about a kid who's half Russian and half Ukrainian, and I'm actually talking about my cousin that lives there. It's a pretty special song to me.

Seems like we've gone back to having the Russians be the bad guys on TV, in the movies, etc. How do you feel about that?

It's funny, because America stereotypes us into always being the bad guys—like the M&M peanut commercials. I'm not really mad about it—it's kinda cool, actually. I like being viewed as that because it gives me this essence, like, "Whoa, I don't really know about him, he [seems] kinda dangerous. I like [that] though, I'm curious." #M

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AVATAR DARKO

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MUSIC NEWSLETTER

The inside scoop on upcoming
shows and the latest reviews.

arts & culture » Music

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event is free and will feature food trucks, a record fair, and a solo acoustic set from The Mear of Austin psych-rockers the Black Angels, as well as music from Overton Berry (of Wheelada's Groove) and the third show in 30 years from Gordie & Joe Emerson, whose early recordings LITA just released. DJ Superguide will spin between sets. A great way to spend a Saturday afternoon. **Light the Fire** Record Shop, 913 N.W. 50th St., 706-6715, lightignite.sfb.net. 3 p.m. **DAVE LAKE** There's no shortage of festivals this time of year, but Jim's **CONCRETE BALL** isn't your average one. Now in its fifth year, the fest showcases some of the Pacific Northwest's best Americana country roots acts. This year, Knut Bell and the Blue Collars, an alt-country quartet that describe its sound as "folkabilly-rockabilly," tops the roster, along with blues-rock duo Dead Man (featuring Slim's own Mike Lucero) and the Disco Cowboys, an outfit that adds Southern flair to disco hits. Presented by Slim & Scott John "Hamcock" Hagan, who will perform with his band The Rooster Run, the ball is a benefit, too—for Childhood Cancer Society—the Jakob Elie Foundation, an organization working on finding a cure and easing the financial burden on families of cancer patients. With Twang Junkies, Harwood, Early Thunder and His So-Called Friends, Darci Carlson, Michael Scott Thomas, Tom Howard, Slim's Last Clinics, 3608 First Ave. S., 726-7900, slimslastclinics.com. Noon. \$15/312 with new, unwrapped toy. 21 and over. **ACP**

Sunday, July 13

A dark and brooding Nana Simara, **PROM QUEEN** Celene "Lenni" Ramoneta—looks like she belongs in a 1980s spy film and sounds like a 1940s femme fatale. Lush, moody, and cinematic, Prom Queen's music is like the offspring of Queen Tarantino's and David Lynch's film scores with Stephen King's Carrie starting in her last album. Right Seed features all original songs and instrumentals, but the singer's old released covers, in which she takes on Extreme's "More Than Words" and Guns N' Roses' "November Rain" in her swaying vintage style. With The Porcupines. The Royal Room, 5000 Rainier Ave. S., 360-9502, theporcupinesseattle.com. 7 p.m. Free. All ages. **DIANA M. LE** A beguiling singer-songwriter who's previously matched her pristine vocals with traditional folk melodies, **LAUREN SHERA** is preparing to release a new album, *Gold and Rust*, which finds her heading in a more country-western-Alabama direction. If the almost mournful "Light and Dust" is any indicator, it's going to surprise a lot of people. With The Local Strangers. The Native Siblings Tractor Tavern, 5213 Ballard Ave. N.W., 789-3559, tractor-tavern.com. 8:30 p.m. \$10. 21 and over. **BP**

Monday, July 14

Early MTV staples **THE FIXX**, a British New Wave group that had a string of hits in the '80s including "One Thing Leads to Another," is finally taking its place at last night by nominating songs to its official site, Facebook, and Twitter. The songs with the most mentions will be played that evening. Through Tuesday. The Triple Door, 216 Union St., 638-4323, thetripledoor.net. 9 p.m. (p.m. Tues.) \$30 adv/\$50 front row. DL

Tuesday, July 15

The carefully crafted Shrike, the fourth full-length from indie-rock duo **WYE AWK**, belies the fact that the band traded ideas while singing/guitarist/assist Jenn Wagner was in the duo's hometown of Baltimore and drummer/keyboardsist Andy Stock split his time between Portland and Marfa, Texas. What's even more intriguing about the album is that it's mostly the pair has collaborated with this album. From 2011's *Civilians* to their latest, Wagner and Stock have exchanged guitar-focused jams for a softer sound on synth-pop. There's a dreamy interplay between Wagner's lush vocals and Stock's vibrant yet hazy keys throughout the album, especially on "The Tower" and "Glow." Shrike's not as bombastic as its title suggests, but Wye Awk's rejuvenated sound still makes a statement. With Pattern is Movement. Neumos, 8 p.m. \$18 adv. 21 and over. **ACP**

Send events to music@seattleweekly.com.
See seattleweekly.com for full listings.

Nick Cave Slays the Paramount

BY MORGEN SCHULER



From the moment the lights went down last Wednesday at the Paramount, Nick Cave was flying and dancing around the stage, a total wild man through his first two songs, "We Real Cool" and "Jubilee Street." The energy was high as he leaped into the crowd and sang directly into the front row, pawing at the audience and grabbing hands here and there. The entire set was full of these intimate moments, and anyone who snuggled a front- or even second-row seat probably touched the artist at some point throughout the set. As an artist, it's hard to fake the kind of energy Cave was delivering, and it made the show 10 times better for fans.

He didn't slow down after those first two songs either, dancing in his weird funky way as if he's using his hands to guide his movements around the floor and taking a small jump when the music gets really intense. Some musicians go into what seems like a trance as the moment and the music take hold; Cave doesn't. He's fully aware yet at the same time totally in the moment.

The set included several familiar tunes, like "Red Right Hand," "God Is in the House," and "The Weeping Song"—for the last of which Cave was singing from Langenau out to perform with him. It's possibly the first time Langenau has been behind in white light onstage, rather than the very dim, blood-red lighting his shows are known to feature. The incredible blend of these two voices should happen more often—the low thrum of both men emanating from the stage as the song flowed through the theater like a dark cloud of smoke.

To say that Nick Cave is weird—his music and maybe even leaning into the macabre—is a fair assessment, but to say he doesn't put on one hell of a show is total cap. Even if you're not completely hooked on his music, Cave's performance was shell-shocking the cash to get a peek into his crazy world. **M**

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